

Reflections

Landscapes
Townscapes
Memorials

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The Journal of the School of Architecture
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Address all correspondence to:

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Reflection (ri flek shen) n. 1.) The act of casting back from a surface. 2) To happen as a result of something. 3.) Something that exists dependently of all other things and from which all other things derive. 4.) To look at something carefully so as to understand the meaning.

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The Park: Prospect and Refuge

Lance M. Neckar
University of Minnesota

Even today, Webster's first definition of park refers to an "enclosed piece of ground," stocked with animals and used at the pleasure of the monarch for recreation in the form of hunting. Geographer Jay Appleton notes that there are many kinds of recreational activity or sport which bring us close "to the primitive habitat situation—the world of pursuing, of escaping, of hiding, and seeking."¹ As Appleton demonstrates, the vocabulary of the hunt is replete with allusions to prospect and refuge symbolism; for example, "view," "covert," "going to ground." Hunting is an activity of apprehending without being apprehended. Both hunter and quarry are engaged in the activity to varying degrees and the landscape must be specifically responsive to the requirements of prospect and refuge. It must open and close; either the topography must vary, or there must be "structure" which provides a view from above or below.

The iconography of hunting and hunting grounds is as ancient as Lascaux, but for purposes of a description of the form of the park, a pragmatic beginning might be made with a rather well-known painting from about 1420 which depicts *The Hunt in the Wood*. Painted by Uccello, the image is one of wealthy, young Florentines on horseback and their servants on foot following dogs and deer into an incredible landscape where all of the trees, regardless of their position in the scene, are nearly equally illuminated and where the ground below the canopy is nearly open. This civilized forest, which offers more

prospect for the hunter than refuge for the prey, is a forerunner of the contemporary—or, at least, the nineteenth-century—park.

In baroque France the design and development of the great hunting chateaux added another component characteristic of park, namely, enclosure. The chateau at Chambord comprised 13,600 acres of wood through which were cut linear rides or drives. Even this very large space was enclosed by a twenty-mile-long wall at the perimeter, the longest wall of its sort in France. Chambord was built for Francois I in 1519 and remained the favored hunting retreat of the French kings through the reign of Louis XIII, who also enjoyed hunting there and at another royal hunting estate, Versailles. Versailles had been reconstructed from a castellated manor in the 1630s under the direction of Louis XIII. His son, Louis XIV, began in 1661 the immense reconstruction and additions to the site which we see in part today and which originally included more than 35,000 acres. There is a dramatic scale even to what scholars have called the *Petit Parc*. These incredibly grandiose gardens that lie near the main palace and the Trianons, combined with the forests, cut-through by allees which radiate from the *Etoile Royale*, give a reduced sense of the original hunting park. This near approximation of infinity may have been so large that a continuous fence was unnecessary.

Survival and hazard are explicit, perhaps, in hunting. The penalties for ignoring hazard



Thomas Cole's "Valley of Vacluse" (1841) depicts a ruined castle high above the habitable landscape below. This Picturesque landscape and others of the Hudson River School became iconographic sources for American Landscape landscape designers. A literal interpretation is seen in the tower at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. (Metropolitan Museum of Art)



One of the great drives that departs from an *etoile* at Versailles, typical of the stellate schemes of French hunting parks. (author)

are great. As Appleton has suggested, recreational activities and their hazards derived from hunting become abstracted, as in the playing of golf, or vicarious, as in the attribution to a landscape of prospect and refuge the characteristics of wild nature. It was the character of the abstraction—its depth and form—which occupied the minds of the eighteenth-century theorists and creators of the English park. Alexander Pope's *Essay On Criticism* (1711) is widely cited as an early inspiration because of the homage it paid to "Nature, at once the source and end and test of Art." While Joseph Addison seemed to encourage the notion of a larger garden estate of park-like proportions, it was left to Stephen Switzer to attempt to delineate the further aspects of its layout in *The Nobleman's Gentleman's and Gardener's Recreation* (1715), which was later expanded under the title *Ichthyographia Rustica*. Switzer himself was ambivalent about the purposes of this garden in the grand manner, and his text was littered with what Hussey calls "polarities" expressive of both pleasure and utility.² As Hussey notes, Switzer never used the term "landscape garden." His work was best represented by the sort of larger-scale scheme seen at Castle Howard, c. 1701, wherein lay the Wraywood, possibly of Switzer's design. The question of enclosure was even less directly addressed: How could Nature, writ large, be enclosed? Switzer confused the issue with suggestions of incorporating the larger landscape in the distance without actually resolving the issue of enclosure necessary to maintain the park as the place of either agriculture or hunting.

This ambivalence possibly was a foreshadowing of the widespread use of the *fosse*, the ha-ha, and other variations on the sunken fence. As LeNotre had created for Louis XIV the illusion of an infinite hegemony, the English landscape designers of the eighteenth century created, or attempted to create, the illusion of nature unbounded, an earthly paradise very much enclosed. Burke's inquiry into the oppositional concepts of the Sublime and the Beautiful established the spectrum of landscape expression available to the painter and designer. The Sublime denoted the contrast of dark and light and emotional aspects of terror and escape associated with the landscape of wild nature, of the hunt. The dual quality of dark and light was explicit; bosques, groves, grottoes—dark spaces—must be balanced by the light. The light entered when wall and canopy opened. One could see in the meadow, but one was also vulnerable to being seen. Topography in the form of great cataracts from which fell cascading volumes of water offered prospect and refuge by the difficulty of their attainment, by their defiance of gravity, and by the noise which erased all other noises and impaired the other senses. Gravity was both friend and foe. The view to the space below afforded advantages. Yet even here, at this prospect, there was hazard. One may fall from a great height. The precipice becomes a cul-de-sac should the quarry surprise the hunter and propel him to certain death. For Burke and his contemporaries one apprehends that such spaces were not desirable as places of dwelling. Frederick Law Olmsted, in his *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (1859), confirmed this supposition in a comparison he drew to American landscape: "The sublime . . . in nature is much more rare in England, except on the sea coast, than in America. But there is everywhere a great deal of quiet, graceful beauty which the works of man have added to. . . ."³

Beauty, the Beautiful, was indeed at the other end of the spectrum. A highly abstracted imitation of nature, the Beautiful presented an entirely vicarious manner of recreation. The English landscape was more rugged than that of the great allee-lined

hunting parks of baroque France, but the premises of the Beautiful in the English landscape nonetheless dictated a softening and control of the landscape, an improvement of nature. Danger and hazard were allegorically presented in the famous stroll garden park at Stourhead created by the banker Henry Hoare. One descended to the underworld with Aeneas and entered the grotto. The darkness of the grotto was merely a shadow of real terror with only abstracted punishment; one walked on, unhindered, to the Pantheon ascending to earth and finally beyond. Attention was paid to darkness and lightness in the placement and type of vegetation, but on the whole, the landscape was envisioned as a series of gently rounded forms which, when composed, looked like paintings after Claude Lorrain—freeze-frame images from a cinematic narrative.



The eighteenth-century English park as realized by the proponents of the Beautiful—especially William Kent, Capability Brown, and later Humphry Repton—was roundly criticized by Sir Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight. Coincidentally, in the same year, 1794, both Price, in essay form, and Knight, in an extended poem, lashed out at the feminine, overly improved pastorals of the Brownian tradition. They offered, instead, the vision of nature unimproved, of vigorous landforms, rough oaks and conifers, and rushing water. This Picturesque vision was a landscape which restored some aspects of nature's real unabridged challenges.



Payne Knight's poem is a cutting satire on the round Brownian landscape, but Price's work, *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared to the Sublime and the Beautiful*, is a treatise in the same serious vein as Burke's *Inquiry*. On the first page Price reveals his point of view in regard to the private parks of England: "Formerly the embellishments of a place were confined to the garden, or a small space near the mansion; while the park, with all its timber and thickets, was left in a state of wealthy neglect, but now these embellishments extend over a whole district; and as they give a new and peculiar character to the general face of the country, it is well worth

The paired images of Picturesque and Brownian "nature" in Richard Payne Knight's poem "The Landscape" (1794) were among the earliest graphic representations of the ideas of landscape tinted by the Sublime in contradistinction to popular aesthetic of pastoral beauty. (from the book)

beautiful one, and whether the present system of improving (to use a short though often an inaccurate term) is founded on any just principles of taste."⁴

Price postulated several critical ideas about landscape. He was, in fact, interested in the study of pictures, i.e., landscape painting, although his first interest was the study of nature, for, like many of his contemporaries, his principle preoccupation was the distinct expressions of nature in landscape. Echoing Burke, he noted that the term Beautiful was much abused in both word and deed, and that the Sublime implied a vast and terrible scale and, in certain cases, a monotonous uniformity. Price maintained then that there is a distinct expression of landscape that conforms to no demands of scale and that "corrects the languor of beauty . . . the horror of sublimity."⁵ He wrote: "I am therefore persuaded that the two opposite qualities of roughness, and of sudden variation, joined to that of irregularity, are the most efficient causes of the picturesque."⁶

Price placed great emphasis on the tempering passage of time and the nemesis of change as they related to the Picturesque: "The limbs of huge trees, shattered by lightning or tempestuous winds, are in the highest degree picturesque; but what has caused those dreaded powers of destruction must always have a tincture of the sublime."⁷

The pleas for the Picturesque seem to have gone largely unheeded in the design of English parks, private and public. In fact, the whole momentum of the English landscape movement had coursed in the opposite direction and in the hands of Repton, John Nash, John Claudius Loudon, and Joseph Paxton would continue to soften the park. This aesthetic evolution—the greater abstraction of the landscape of the hunt—was also built on a recreational policy which obliterated the Picturesque. The private and Parliamentary Enclosure Acts created the English landscape park as much as the paintings of Claude Lorrain, the writings of Pope and Addison, or the actual designers. These acts judged the open English landscape and the villages amid that

landscape to be aesthetically inferior to the possibility of improvement at the hands of aristocratic landowners and their designated creators of the park. The Enclosure Acts were literal in their intent. They were meant to enclose lands for the recreational and agricultural purposes of their owners.

William Wyndham, one of Repton's admirers, confirmed the notion of the habitable park in an enthusiastic if incoherent letter to the landscape designer. He believed, perhaps erroneously, that the Picturesque concepts advocated by Price and Knight were only about the making of landscapes derived from, or suitable for, pictures. He wrote:

"... the instance of an extensive prospect, the most affecting sight that the eye can bring before us, is quite conclusive. I do not know anything that does . . . so strongly affect the mind, as the sudden transition from such a portion of space as we may commonly have in our minds, to such a view of the habitable globe as may be exhibited in the case of some extensive prospects. Many things too, as you illustrate well in the instance of deer, are not capable of representation in a picture at all. . . . the beauties of nature itself, . . . which painting can exhibit, are many, and most of them probably of a sort which have nothing to do with habitation. . . . A scene of a cavern, with banditti sitting by it, is a favourite subject by Salvator Rosa; but are we therefore to live in caves, or encourage the neighborhood of banditti?"⁸

In a letter of 1794, Repton expressed his opinion of the value of the prospect, which he distinguished from landscape, the former being: "the proper subject of the painter and the latter is that in which everybody delights; and in spite of the fastidiousness of connoisseurship, we must allow something for the general voice of mankind."⁹

These Reptonian ideas of habitability and practicality were greatly furthered and extended in the early-nineteenth-century works of Nash, Loudon, and Paxton. Nash was the author of plans for Regent's Park (c. 1811), a private residential park, and St. James Park (1828), a crown park intended for

public use, wherein the principal effect was made by the creation of a romantic winding lake which, when bridged, yielded a magnificent prospect of St. James Palace. Although St. James Park is outside the historic public park movement (it was owned by the crown), as Chadwick notes, it was, in fact, the first to open to the public.¹⁰ The public was not admitted to Regent's Park until 1838; it was necessary to be a man of fortune to enter the early parks since the only recreation to be had there was riding. No walkways or shelter were available to the pedestrian, but no longer was the hunt the principal focus of park-making.

Loudon mollified nature further with his Gardenesque approach to landscape. In fact, Loudon focused his work on the garden scale. In 1831, he executed one of his larger commissions, a 16-acre "public" garden at Birmingham for the Botanical and Horticultural Society. The site was organized by a series of curvilinearly disposed promenades. The central feature of the design was a large, circular glass house. Here the abstraction and vicarious quality of "the park" was extended to capturing exotic landscape under glass where it could be held for the view of the public—a kind of botanical menagerie. The peril was not present; only the captured quarry could testify to the danger. For the non-riding public, walking became the principal recreational activity of the age. Paradise on earth in Loudon's time was a stroll through a glass house in which the polychrome trophies of the "hunt" were mounted.

Paxton, also of glass-house fame, created a design for Birkenhead Park (1844-45) in Liverpool which is much acclaimed as a seminal source for Frederick Law Olmsted's work on Central Park. The formal aspects of the park give little hint of the American work to come; the perimeter of the park was, in fact, bounded by a curvilinear drive lined with terraces and villas. It was the social idea of the park—its expressed and democratic intent—which particularly moved Olmsted when he visited the 125-acre park in 1850. Here there was not only pastoral gardening of the highest order, but also a cricket field,

archery grounds, drives, and sheep meadows. It was designed to be used by all. In Birkenhead the park was reactivated by Paxton; it remained essentially Reptonian in form, but its public and active aspects were revolutionary signals that genteel abstraction was not the chief measure of park-making.

In the country of the revolution, the United States, in this period there were no such public parks. There were squares, unimproved commons, and other public gardens, but no large-scale parks. Recreation was sought at the edges of urbanization where there was an ample wilderness in the early nineteenth century. In his recent book, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*, David Schuyler has painted a rich picture of the intellectual climate in America which gave rise to the public-park movements in New York and elsewhere in the 1840s and 1850s. He has properly noted that the mere existence of European public parks "touched a sensitive nerve among American Leaders."¹¹ Andrew Jackson Downing and others praised the reformist intentions of the park as a means of promoting a more "fraternal spirit" among all classes of American society.¹² Recognizing the actual caste barriers of our industrialized nation, these travelers reported in astonishment the democratic scenes they witnessed amid the stratified society of the old world. Nature, it was believed, would elevate the pursuits and interests of those who would be attracted to its contemplation in the parks. The question at that time was, what sort of nature? Was it the nature that could be abstracted on a 16- or 125-acre site such as those developed by Loudon and Paxton in England or, as it happened, a nature writ in the larger forms of the American landscape?

Schuyler and others have been correct in pointing to the rural cemetery movement and, specifically, the development of Mt. Auburn (1831) on a 72-acre site in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as an important precursor to the park. A far-sighted group of men in Boston, led by a physician, Jacob Bigelow, sought to provide this singular place

of recreation. The site was symbolically named for the deserted village in the Oliver Goldsmith poem decrying the Enclosure Movement. The design of Mt. Auburn by Alexander Wadsworth and H. A. S. Dearborn in concert with their clients constituted a richly layered landscape which retained elements of the English park but was also curiously American in its Picturesque aspects. When it was begun, there were probably but a handful of important American landscape paintings in the Picturesque style of the Hudson River School. However, as the somewhat miniaturized landscape of the cemetery evolved in the 1840s, the canvases of Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand certainly must have been known to the designers. Specific scenes may have been called to mind. The castellated tower atop Auburn's Mount is a smaller evocation of Cole's "Valley of Vaucluse" (1841); and the hilly terrain of the site with its gothic chapel and monuments recalls Durand's "The Evening of Life" (1840), one of a series of canvases on the cyclical pattern of life and death.

Mt. Auburn was no mere painterly burying ground. Bigelow and his cohorts conceived of the space as a series of landscape rooms designed to portray the passage of life and death—and life again each spring—and simultaneously to display and test plant material appropriate to that mood, scientifically, as in an arboretum. Intimations of paradise and lessons of horticulture were conjoined. The topography of the site was in some places quite demanding. It was used to effect. At Mt. Auburn, the prospect was gained by the price of exertion. The realization of the scheme presented a physical, emotional, and intellectual challenge to the pedestrian who would traverse the entire cemetery to the heights of the mount, pause to reflect on mortality and immortality, and climb the steps to the top of the castle to gain the prospect.

The arboretum-cemetery at Mt. Auburn was also well conceived as a landscape benchmark of advancing urbanization in the

United States. However, further measures were needed. In 1844 and 1845, William Cullen Bryant's editorials in the *New York Evening Post* testified to the need for a public park and duly praised the English examples. By 1848, Downing had clarified to readers of his magazine, *The Horticulturist*, that the French and the Germans had already surpassed America in the creation of public (and private) parks. In 1850-51, after visiting England, he wrote several letters in his magazine exhorting New Yorkers to take action. In August 1851, Downing's lead article, "The New-York Park," emphatically expressed the need for a large recreational space—five hundred acres being a minimum size in his view.¹³ In epistolary form, he outlined the site that he proposed in the center of Manhattan, from 39th Street to the Harlem River. Two years later, the process was set in motion by an act of the state legislature authorizing the city of New York to take the site which stretched from 59th to 106th Street.

The narrative of the famous design competition need not be repeated here. More interesting is Olmsted's conceptual basis for the winning design, "Greensward," which embodied a combination of soft, Reptonian, pastoral spaces bounded by Picturesque edges, the latter being inherent in the rough site. The strong edges lent, originally, a powerful sense of visual enclosure to the scheme. This conceptual basis, which combined the pastoral (i.e., the Beautiful) and the Picturesque, was given lengthy articulation by Olmsted and Vaux in their 1858 report on the park, wherein they described the difficulty of adjusting pastoral scenery to "the various elements of natural topography" on the site.¹⁴ The motivations for this scheme are attributable in a large degree to Olmsted's concept of park, which was greatly informed by his walking trip to England and Wales in 1850.

Well known, perhaps, are Olmsted's remarks, alluded to earlier, about the democratic intentions of Birkenhead, which he toured, almost by chance, immediately upon his arrival. Here, and later at Hereford,



The weeping beech trees in Mount Auburn Cemetery speak of grief and mourning but, because they are alive, also speak of rebirth, of re-creation. They add extra layers of meaning to a landscape of prospect and refuge.
(author)

Olmsted focused on the social precepts of public open space. The spatial expression of park was amplified, however, in his commentary on the private parks that he visited, either alone or with his traveling companions, John Hull Olmsted, his younger brother, and Charles Loring Brace, a lifelong friend. At Powis Castle in Wales, walking alone, he was turned back from the summit of "a picturesque mountain-side park" by the owner's bull mastiff.¹⁵ At Eaton Park, with his traveling companions, he had greater success. They tramped for some miles over undistinguished territory to find "a gently undulating landscape of close-cropped pasture land, reaching way off ilimitably. . . . Herds of fallow deer, lawns, cattle, sheep, and lambs quietly feeding near us, and moving slowly in masses at a distance; a warm atmosphere, descending sun, and sublime shadows from fleecy clouds transiently darkening in succession, sunny surface, cool woodside, flocks and herds, and foliage."¹⁶ Two paragraphs later he noted: "We concluded that the sheep and cattle were of the most value for their effect in the landscape; but it was a little exciting to us to watch the

deer. . . . still more when one, two, or three [deer], which had been separated from a nearer herd, suddenly started, and dashed wildly by us, within pistol shot."¹⁷ This paragraph was followed by a conversation among the travelers recalling hunting of fallow deer, small European deer, in Maine. While Olmsted was unable to reconcile the social messages of the private park—the abundance of game, for example, which would never reach the tenants' plates—with his aesthetic appreciation, the visual and emotional potency of the English park became, paradoxically, a powerful tool of his own democratic vision. The landscape of pastoral and rough picturesqueness, of prospect and refuge, would be enclosed at the boundary to preserve its democratic intention. No special privilege was to be given to the owners of adjoining property; the space of the recreation within would be the province of all.

Today, the dark side of the landscape of the hunt is that the large park is, or is perceived to be, dangerous. The landscape of prospect and refuge can be the landscape of assault

and banditti. The park is a diurnal space, and always has been. But there has always been implicit danger in the space of the park. At times, usually after dark, the danger becomes real. At night the spatial definitions of prospect and refuge are blurred. What was by day a glorious meadow for sport by night becomes a space where we might or might not be seen. Certainly, the wood at the edge, which might be the daytime setting of children's cinematically inspired mock warfare, by dusk is a covert for the hunter of the night. In the past, the nighttime landscape of the hunt gave the advantage of covert to the prey; a foolish hunter caught in the park at night could find the roles reversed. There is little difference today.

Withal, the value of the park as a landscape is widely shared. The restoration of Central Park and the devotion of New Yorkers to their park is one testimonial to the durability of the basic convention. In the search for new, generally vicarious forms of recreation, the park has also been further miniaturized, adapted, and reinterpreted, as vestpocket parks, neighborhood parks, suburbs, and playgrounds. In the past, the Picturesque landscapes of the Hudson River School were the "flashcards" by which Americans created the park. The park and the Picturesque were nearly indistinguishable. The park was and is a landscape of prospect and refuge; the Picturesque has provided a convenient wellspring of ideas for the creation of prospect and refuge in many American landscapes. At least one observer has, however, recently questioned the durability of the Picturesque as a source of landscape design in our time.¹⁸ Perhaps it is not so much that the Picturesque has failed as a vision, but that we have failed to understand its essential ideas and their relationship to American landscape. It is also possible that we have lost sight of the essential notions of park as an abstracted landscape of the hunt—an enclosed space of prospect and refuge. The enlightened exploration of the distinct concepts of Picturesque landscape and park may yet offer the sustenance that is the fortunate product of the hunt.

Notes

- 1 Appleton, p. 184.
- 2 Hussey, p. 34.
- 3 Olmsted, p. 263.
- 4 Price, p. 1.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 86.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 44.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 56.
- 8 Loudon, p. 115.
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 108.
- 10 Chadwick, p. 34.
- 11 Schuyler, p. 64.
- 12 *ibid.*, p. 65.
- 13 Olmsted *Forty Years of Landscape Architecture*, p. 27.
- 14 *ibid.*, p. 46.
- 15 Olmsted *Walks and Talks*, p. 184.
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 114.
- 17 *ibid.*, p. 115.
- 18 Howett, p. 11.

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The Allegory of the Garden:

The Garden as Symbol in the Art and Architecture in the Age of Humanism

Paul Armstrong
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

*And lo! The gesdin [tree] shining
stands
With crystal branches in the golden
sands,
In the immortal garden stands the
tree;
With trunk of gold, and beautiful to see.
Beside a sacred font the tree is
placed,
With emeralds and unknown gems is
graced.*

Epic of Gilgamesh

In the Brancacci Chapel in Florence the human pathos of the Fall of Man from supernatural grace is retold with exquisite passion and sensitivity in one of the great masterpieces of the Quattrocento. Masaccio's *Expulsion*, painted in 1425, illustrates the Fall not simply as a stylized narrative of the familiar Genesis story, but, most significantly, as an allegory of the human condition—the alienation of man from the supernatural and from nature itself; a passage from innocence to experience. Adam and Eve are no longer merely figures in a medieval morality play, but, for the first time in Western art, are shown to be corporeal human beings locked into a universal drama of mortal despair. Frederick Hartt has described the scene:

"... a calm celestial messenger hovers above the rudimentary gate, holding a sword in his right hand and pointing with his left to the barren world outside Eden. Adam moves forth at the angel's bidding as if driven by a spiritual force. He hides his eyes with

clutching hands as if unable to contemplate his own guilt of the horror before him, his mouth contorted, the muscles of his abdomen convulsed, his limbs shivering. Eve, her hands assisting the leaves that hide her nakedness, opens her mouth in a cry of despair. Superficially the drama has been reduced to its essential elements—two naked, suffering humans striding out into the cold. No more is necessary. Yet one senses beyond it the greater tragedy of exclusion from God and from the Christian community, whose rites and rules are celebrated in the other frescoes."¹

The biblical Eden of the Old Testament was an earthly paradise which rivaled the remote and unattainable celestial abode of God. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament the word *paradeisos* is used for "garden." Thus paradise became identified with the Garden of Eden. The Hebrews derived *pardes* (meaning "garden") during their Babylonian captivity. The English word *paradise* is a translation of the Old Persian *pairīdazea* ("walled garden"), from the Latin *paradisus*, which was derived from the Greek essayist/historian Xenophon in 401 B.C. Xenophon's writings were believed to have inspired Virgil to plant a *paradisus* or enclosed Persian-style garden with groves of trees about a Roman temple.²

A mystical feeling for flowers and a love for gardens were considered ancient Persian characteristics. The oldest Persian garden was built by Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae more than 2,500 years ago, in about 546 B.C.



Hieronymus Bosch: *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Prado, Madrid.

Only a schematic representation of the original garden is possible; however, it is known that the garden was designed to complement buildings and served to unite the official and residential palaces. Its essential elements included a geometric plan defined by a carved stone watercourse and trees and shrubs planted symmetrically in plots. On raised rectangular platforms of dressed stone stood two pavilions within the garden. Each building had columned porticoes and consisted of one room with thick walls of mud brick. This design remained the prototype for garden pavilions for centuries.

Greek culture and the concept of the garden as described in Xenophon's writings spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean and far beyond with the conquests of Alexander of Macedonia. The curious plants that Alexander's officers discovered on their oriental campaigns inspired the famous botanical garden, Aristotle's Lyceum at Athens. The association between philosophy and gardens was created at the School of Athens where Plato taught in the tree-planted gymnasium of the Academy. Later

philosophers owned gardens adorned with classical features which included shrines to the muses (a rocky grotto or nymphaeum watered by a fountain or spring), shady porticoes for sculpture display, and tree-lined walks.

Like the royal garden of Cyrus at Pasargadae, the Roman garden was attached to a villa and enclosed with courtyards and colonnades. The garden as a place of inspiration and repose was unknown to the pragmatic Roman world until the second century B.C. when the influence of the Hellenistic world began to penetrate Roman society. The early religious associations of the garden as a sacred grove dedicated to a god or goddess or surrounding a tomb were eventually replaced by artistic and social ones. Although the component parts remained the same, the small temples, grottoes, and nymphaeums originally dedicated to the muses and tutelary deities now served as architectural ornaments. An innovative feature common to Roman and Renaissance gardens was the incorporation of *topia*, reliefs and paintings portraying garden architecture in a picturesque setting of rugged mountains and sea-

side cliffs, or on shores of lakes and rivers, which were used to decorate walls of porticoes bringing the gardens themselves right into buildings.

In *Italian Gardens* Georgina Masson writes that the particular interest of the Pompeian gardens³ of antiquity lies in the fact that even in a small space they contained many of the features of later Roman gardens from which those of the Renaissance drew their inspiration. Two of the most important features in this respect are the interpretation of the house and the garden and the axial planning. The main living-room usually opened into the courtyard on one side of the axis and the garden from the center of the house. A painted garden perspective, complete with trees, fountains, and trellises upon the wall at the far end, prolonged this view even farther. This type of *trompe l'oeil* painting was employed in porticoes and peristyles to give a feeling of greater space and, like the Greek *topia*, seemed to bring the out-of-doors right into the house.

The gardens of the Middle Ages were small cloisters sheltered within the walls of castles and cities. The feudal social system and the constant turmoil and upheavals of the period dictated defensible walled cities of concentrated population densities. Therefore, it was in the monasteries that the tradition of the contemplative garden prevailed. When St. Augustine first assembled his followers in the African province of Hippo in a garden of a villa given by his friend Valerius, he reinstated the Platonic tradition of teaching in a garden where one could seek peace and isolation from the temptations of the outside world. He also established a precedent, and monastic orders established themselves in the ruins of Roman villas in Italy. The first monastic order in Western Europe was established by St. Benedict at the end of the fifth century in the grotto of the ruins of Nero's villa at Subiaco. Thus the monastery cloister evolved from the colonnaded peristyle of the Roman country house. The garden of the Abbey of Cassino was described as "a paradise in the Roman fashion."

At the early-ninth-century Benedictine monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland, plants were grown in rectangular beds, each one usually reserved for a separate species. These were further divided into garden simples, which included roses, lilies, gladioli, and scented herbs such as rue, rosemary, and sage; and vegetable gardens, which included leeks, lettuces, garlic, parsley, chervil, and poppies, the seeds of which were used for flavoring. An orchard, which also served as the cemetery, included pears, plums, mulberries, and fig and nut trees. In medieval Sicily, the secular pleasure gardens of the Saracen emirs and Norman kings first made their appearance; part garden, part hunting enclosure, these "pleasure parks" were modeled on the oriental paradises. Although their effect on subsequent garden development in Italy was small, they did serve to keep alive the tradition of the pleasure garden.⁴

The first man of modern times to envisage the garden as a proper setting for the poet and man of learning as in the ancient world was Petrarch, in the fourteenth century. In the following century, Plato's gymnasium of the Academy in Athens inspired members of Cosimo de' Medici's Platonic Academy to hold gatherings at his villa at Careggi. The study of *humane literae* (classical literature and history) was the precursor of the humanist movement of the sixteenth century and inevitably ensured Florence's reputation as the cradle of the Renaissance. The humanists' aim was to recapture the spirit of the ancient world by perfecting the ideals of beauty and knowledge in the "complete man" of the Renaissance.

In the first half of the fifteenth century, humanism gave new life and energy to the arts and inspired the new ideas around which that energy was centered. In the second half of the century, literature and art were adding to the interest in antique forms, a concern for accurately depicting nature, which was glorified as the archetype of human endeavor and the manifest handiwork of God. However, the paths of literature and art were beginning to diverge as painting and

sculpture were beginning to supplant literature as the primary means for the expression of the sublime and the acquisition of fame.

"But if literature, for the most part, wove attenuated tales about the love of life, but lacked any solid underpinning of civic theory, art was more concerned with synthesis and imagination. It was thus a better vehicle for man's self-awareness and soon prevailed over other means of intellectual expression. Man found himself, freed himself, as it were, from supernatural forces. Proud of his reconquered liberty and individuality, enhanced with his own image, thirsting for fame, and moved by a resurgent appreciation of beauty, he gave palpable, plastic form to the creations of his mind."⁵

The Garden of Earthly Delights

To fully appreciate the humanists' emerging world-view, one must turn to the pictorialization of the Renaissance landscape. Medieval painting is characterized by a "fractional naturalism, directed at the individual manifestations of God's creations."⁶ In medieval art, landscape elements were symbols whose usual function was to clarify the narrative rather than create an illusion of space. Masaccio's frescoes break with Gothic naturalism in their desire of illusionistic coherency where space is rationally defined, where light and atmosphere fill that space, and where detail is sacrificed in the interests of generalization. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Renaissance artist is able to fully realize the union between figures and the world in which they dwell to convey a compelling mood.

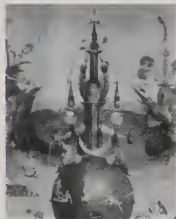
The differences between the tumultuous uncertainty of the Middle Ages and the idealized synthesis of beauty and nature of the humanists' of the Renaissance can be contrasted in two paintings executed not more than a century apart, yet pivotal in their reflections of Western Europe at the threshold of a new era. Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* was painted in the late Middle Ages,⁷ a time of extreme contrasts and turmoil in which distinctions

between inner and outer realities were blurred, and demons and apocalyptic forces were elements of everyday life. European society in that era believed in a Wrath which was forever on the verge of destroying the world. The Black Plague, the late battles of the Hundred Years' War, and the first onslaughts of the Turks contributed to an atmosphere of motiveless, spontaneous violence. "An order of things was becoming unraveled when Bosch was born. (Bosch's birth coincided with the fall of Constantinople.) The savage security of feudalism had lain in a general understanding that the system mirrored—indeed was an extension of—the order of things in heaven."⁸

The malevolence of a world under siege and the disquieting allusions of eternal damnation are thinly veiled by the apparent tranquility and virtual utopian *joie de vivre* of the left and central panels of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. The left hand, or *Eden*, panel of the triptych depicts the Sixth Day of the creation:

"There are the new-made Adam and Eve in the foreground, naked and awestruck, with Jesus present in the ancient tradition of showing their creation as accomplished by the Word of God. The trees around them are heavy with appetizing fruit; there is the Fountain of Life beyond the trees . . . but the little pool by which Adam and Eve have awakened is dark and stagnant, and seething with sinister life. . . . The equivocal treatment of this ominous paradise continues into the background, to a curiously crab-like Fountain of Life and the contorted rock formations beyond. . . . Twined around a palm tree above the cave, the serpent looks on unobtrusively."⁹

Disconcerting imagery pervades the composition of each panel. The fountain itself is prominently decorated with the crescent moon—almost invariably a mark of the Devil, with its obvious associations with Islam and the Turk. Perhaps the most disquieting creature of Bosch's bestiary is the owl which peers from within the circular base of the fountain.



The owl's unblinking gaze implied the discipline and concentration of the alchemist, rather than the ascetic. Sacred to Athena, the owl was the bird of sorcerers and philosophers and symbolized the search for hidden understanding long before the Christian concept of Original Sin.

In Bosch's world, everything stood for something truer than itself. The secret messages and allusions are always there and not always hidden—folk images and symbols which seem to double back on themselves like optical illusions. In *The Garden of Earthly Delights* many of the standard representations can be identified: the riders who ring the pool in the central panel are all mounted on animals symbolizing lustful vitality, while the bathers luxuriate under the eyes of the peacock of vanity, the crows of unbelief, and the owl of forbidden wisdom.

The primordial landscape of the *Eden* panel, with its oblique references of humanity's sinister spring, evolves into the high summer incarnate of the orgiastic ecstasy of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* itself:

"The landscape is insane with fecundity . . . pulpy vegetable castles, mongrels of cactus, pineapple, gourd, puffball . . . are fermentation made flesh; their impossible vigor embodies the sweet, mazing anarchy of this garden where there are no rules, no boundaries, while everything can couple fruitfully with everything else—flower with stone, animal with human, human with water."¹⁰

As the viewer scans the panels from left to right, the garden's inhabitants appear to have grown smaller since *Eden*, in proportion to their surroundings. Adam and Eve appear much larger than the swift miniature monsters of the foreground pool, and on a generally human scale with the creatures around the Fountain of Life. The sense of feverish sensual greed and of contradictory delicacy is heightened by Bosch's treating each individual figure like a miniature in the garden's graceful cacophony of erotic activity. In hell, dwarfed by the macabre ma-

chines that torture them, the figures will be smaller still.

The chaotic fecundity of the garden of the central panel becomes hell on earth in the final, righthand scene. Bosch's hell is a visual slang, physical representations of the popular beliefs that the damned souls are set to acting out forever and ever. Punishment tends to fit the crime as gamblers, drinkers, and lechers are recognized by their torments. Frequently referred to as "The Infernal Concert," those who have, in a real sense, disrupted the harmony of the world are crucified on harpstrings, impaled on wind instruments, caged inside huge horns, drums, and hurdy-gurdies in hell's counterpart of a celestial choir. Menaced by gigantic instruments, knife-like war machines, and hybrid monsters, and set in a smokey landscape of sulfuric volcanos and frozen waters, Bosch's hell is the transformation of the earthly paradise into its diabolical counterpart—the inevitable consequence of man's unbridled folly. In the end, all are symbols of sterility, transience, and death.

Ultimately, Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* is a persuasive Christian allegory where almost every object has some sort of mystic meaning.¹¹ Peter S. Beagle has remarked that, "Bosch was a pessimist before he was anything else, and pessimism has only one orthodoxy, transcending all sects and times. It is that the human fate is always to dream of heaven and create hell, over and over, under many names, including heaven."¹²

The Primavera

If Bosch's triptych illustrates the almost fanatical religious freneticism of the Late Middle Ages with its nightmarish horrors of a world gone awry, it is diametrically opposed to the Platonic tranquility and idyllic optimism of Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* of the late fifteenth century.

According to Umberto Baldini, for Botticelli the artistic "crisis" of the fifteenth century entailed three primary concerns: the under-





Sandro Botticelli: *Primavera*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

standing of space and perspective; the redefinition of form as the knowledge and representation of nature; and the importance of history, or narrative, as the recounting of human actions. It was a forward leap of the imagination, beginning on the ideological plane, and directed toward the pursuit of beauty. Henceforth, beauty would be the most important aim of philosophy, classic learning, and human behavior as well as of art. Read as an allegory of human life, the *Primavera* is one of the greatest, most authentic revelations of the Renaissance and its new message. When his art reached its zenith in the 1480s, Botticelli found himself in the company of philosophers, scholars, poets, writers, and men of science in the charmed circle of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Inspired by the poetry of Plutarch, beauty was sought and found in the ancient world together with high ideals for human nature. In the Greek sense, Lorenzo regarded the work of art as essential to the celebration of the individual and to the civilization to which the individual belonged. Cosimo de' Medici regarded architecture as the greatest of all art forms because it expressed the notion of constructive power, which was inherent to his concept of government. To Lorenzo, his grandson, the greatest

arts were poetry, sculpture, and painting, since these three best reflected the growth of the civic ideal and the increased refinement of social intercourse during his times.

Set in a meadow dappled with wildflowers against the backdrop of an orchard loaded with ripening fruit, the *Primavera* is an entirely allegorical painting embodying the central elements of Neo-Platonic thought. One interpretation of the painting, based on the identities of the mythological figures, is that it represents the domain of Venus. Zephyr, the West Wind, transforms his bride, the nymph Chloris, into Flora. Spring itself (*Primavera*). Her flowers bloom in April, the month of Venus, the goddess of beauty and fertility. Cupid is the procreative spirit, born of Venus and Mercury, and the Three Graces are associated with Venus as minor nature deities.

The earliest modern interpretation of the painting, in 1888, by Adolph Gaspary, the German historian of Italian literature, suggested that the Venus of the *Primavera* illustrated the goddess of Poliziano's idyllic poem "Stanza per la Giostra Giuliano." The theory was further extended by linking the



mythological figures of the painting with historic personages of the Medici family. Within the context of Neo-Platonic ideals, Venus is the incarnation of Marsilio Ficino's doctrine: "She is Love." Venus gives life and has the power to transcend the physical world into the spiritual realm of the intellect and ideal. The classical Venus becomes the *Venus Humanitas* the arouser of passions who also moderates them in full and universal harmony.

"The *Primavera*, then, may be interpreted as a symbolic reference to the Platonic cycle: the passage from the active to the elevated, more contemplative life, from the temporal to an eternal plane. Ovid tells how Zephyr married the nymph Chloris, who brought forth flowers and was changed by him into the goddess Flora. The episode thus illustrates how the primordial force of passionate love is influenced, through Cupid, by the power of the Venus of Harmony and then passes through sublimation (the Graces) to *recreatio*, the return, beyond nature, to its beginnings in intellectual contemplation. Mercury, in his Orphic role as conductor of the dead, indicates to Love, who has risen from passion to the ecstasy of contemplation, the infinite horizons of the world beyond, which transcends both speech and reason."¹³

The Garden and the Villa

The humanists' ideals of balance and symmetry were applied to architecture and garden design. The writings of Vitruvius, Varro, and Pliny provided sources for early Renaissance villa and garden design. Among the earliest Renaissance villas was the Quattrocento hunting-lodge dependence of the famous Medici villa of Cafaggiolo. More medieval in character than Renaissance, the four-square castellated villa with watch tower was converted for Cosimo de' Medici by Michelozzo in 1451. Approached by cypress-lined roads, the hilltop site of the villa commands some of the most beautiful views of Tuscany. The garden is a walled enclosure detached from the house and lying on a sloping site to the south. A lunette in the Museo Topografico in Florence shows the layout of the house, chapel, farm, and walled

garden with its lower pergola intact. Running the length of the side of the garden, the vine pergola shades the grassy terrace and is one of the few remaining in Italy to have retained its semicircular red brick columns with grey stone plinths and foliage capitals.

The ancient idea of the contemplative life, the life of artistic and philosophical creativity that could only blossom in the countryside, was revived by Petrarch in the mid-fourteenth century. In the valley of Vaucluse he found a modest *villeta* of three or four rooms with two gardens, one dedicated to Apollo, and the other to Bacchus. In a grotto near the house, Petrarch wrote of his "transalpine Helicon" (or Mount Parnassus) on whose summit the Castalian fountain of the muses sprang up in the hoofprints of Pegasus as he soared from the mountaintop. He explains his action in his treatise *Solitary Life*: "Whether we are intent upon God or upon ourselves and our serious studies, or whether we are seeking for a mind in harmony with our own, it behooves us to withdraw as far as may be from the haunts of men and crowded cities." He commences his example with Adam: "Alone he lives in peace and joy, with his companion in labor and much sorrow. Alone he had been immortal, as soon as he joined with woman he becomes mortal."¹⁴

The humanists, however, rejected Petrarch's ideal of solitary virtue and considered political and communal service their main endeavor. For them the city was the only proper environment as a center of trade or business for men. They had little interest in the country except as a place to produce livestock. The humanists considered the palaces and villas of Florence a reflection of the glory and magnificence of the city, praising the villa, therefore, within the context of the fabric of society and not as a social retreat.

Inspired by the philosophical writings of Cicero, the ancient Roman tradition of the "villa dialogue" was revived by the fifteenth-century humanists with most of their dialogues set within a villa or its garden. Among

the most notable locations for these literary and philosophical gatherings were the garden of Alberti, called the Paradiso; the cloisters of the monastery of S. Spirito and the monastery at Sta. Maria degli Angeli; and Bracciolini's small villa at Terranuova in the Val d'Arno which he called his Academia Valdormina, just as Cicero had called his Tusculan villa the Academia after Plato's famous school at Athens.

With the secularization of culture in the fifteenth century, the villa gradually replaced the monastery as the center of contemplative life in Italy. In the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance when urban centers arose to political prominence and along with them a burgeoning leisure class, the tradition of *villeggiatura* or withdrawal to a country residence had become popular. Several factors promoted the importance of *villeggiatura*, among which included: geography and climate, which in central Italy was remarkably conducive to good health and well being; the importance of the extended family as the source of political and social power and its retention of ties to its point of origin; and the association of the villa as an aspect of an agrarian society.

The Villa Medici at Fiesole may be considered the first true Italian Renaissance villa. Designed by Michelozzo and built between 1458 and 1461, its original fifteenth-century character has disappeared. However, the garden has been only superficially changed; the fundamental lines of its terraces and its magnificent views are still intact. The view fulfills more perfectly perhaps than any other Medici villa Alberti's maxim that the site should overlook a city or plain "bounded by familiar mountains" and that in the foreground there should be the "delicacy of gardens."¹⁵

In typical Tuscan style, a long avenue of cypress trees lines the approach to the main terrace. Another cypress-lined walk leads to the hill above and a bowling green. The open, grassy terrace is shaded by trees and bordered by lemon trees in pots. Perhaps the most intriguing space (as well as the most

original in character) is the *giardino segreto* located in a prolongation of the terrace behind the house. Only a few feet square and laid out in the simplest Renaissance style with a circular opening and a fountain at the crossing, it is perfectly designed for talk and contemplation. Stone seats line the wall of the house under a loggia for daytime shade and catch the early evening sun. Stone balusters replace the boundary wall at the corners to reveal the beautiful view of Florence and the valley of the Arno.

As the turmoil and conflict of the Middle Ages evolved to the erudite philosophy and pursuit of beauty of the Renaissance and its attendant reassessment of antiquity, the new era of humanism, foreshadowed by Masaccio, emerged based on a new perception of man as the cosmic center of his world and created in the image of God as reflected through nature: "We look into a world where man, a solitary figure, is both identified by what Marsilio Ficino called the "nostalgia for something lost" and consoled by its recovery. Man himself, rather than any earthly object or landscape, appears, above all else, the supreme beauty of this world: He is at once its nucleus, its essence, its motivation. He is the world's finite heart, distinguishable from a vague and undefined infinity."¹⁶

The Paradise Myth

The Paradise Myth or Paradise as Garden is one of man's oldest ideals. Paradise was the secure, ideal, and everlasting garden. The tradition of the Western garden can be traced directly to the continuity of a garden tradition stemming from the ancient empires of the river valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates; the Achaemenians, the greatest gardeners of the ancient world; and Cyrus the Great's garden at his capital at Pasargadae. Later, the Sumerian-Babylonian paradise was recalled by the Homeric Elysian Fields—a place of perfect bliss and immortality.

The symbolic relationships among water, the Cosmic Tree, and the garden have been historically intertwined with the cultures of both the Near East and the West since the Old



Testament account of the Garden of Eden. In the earliest known civilization of the lower Mesopotamia in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers the belief that water was the source of all life was a common idea in many cultures. Cultivation of the great alluvial river basin was made possible by irrigation. Elizabeth Moynihan observes that early communities were evidently democratic: every man cooperated to build and maintain the canals, dikes, and reservoirs or earthen tanks on which crops and life depended. Violent floods occurred periodically and were disastrous. Thus, through dependence and fear, these primitive cultivators developed a reverence for water. One of their earliest deities was the god of sweet water, whom they also regarded as the friend and protector of man.

Nature myths, which endured for centuries, were among the early oral traditions in archaic Mesopotamian civilization. Plants and trees not only symbolized vegetation deities, but were believed to contain a divine presence.

The worship of the cosmologically sacred tree was a result of the development of religious ritual and the prominence of votive trees. The miraculous Cosmic Tree is a common motif

found throughout the world and usually represents regeneration or immortality. In the Garden of Eden of Genesis, the Cosmic Tree was the Tree of Life and associated with immortality. The Cosmic Tree also has been found to symbolize the heavens or a means of ascent to heaven. Sacred trees are mentioned in the sacred literature of the world's major religions, as the Tree of Knowledge, or the Tree of Good and Evil. The Cosmic Tree has appeared as an inverted tree with its roots in heaven, growing downward toward the earth. Cypress trees inevitably appear in Persian and Mughal gardens; great avenues of cypress often border the watercourses which divide the garden into plots. In Persian cultures, the cypress tree came to symbolize immortality through its association with water, the elixir of life.

In Christian theology, water is the symbol for rebirth and reunification of man with God. The Old Testament account of the Garden of Eden and the Fall is an allegory of the spiritual alienation of man from the supernatural—the separation of man's physical nature from his divine nature. Adam and Eve chose between good and evil. Their choice cost them and their progeny peaceful bliss and eternal happiness. It is only through the spiritual rebirth of baptism that the stain of Original Sin can be removed and that the individual can be spiritually reunited with the Christian community.

Hieronymus Bosch's entropic view of the fate of man is an accurate reflection of the political and theological climate of the chaotic Middle Ages. In Bosch's duplicitous world a malevolent evil is forever lurking behind an illusionistic veil of innocence waiting to entice and entrap man in his own folly. The Fountain of Life, which is so prominent in both the *Eden* and the *Garden* panels, gives sustenance to the creatures which partake of its waters. Yet its forms symbolically allude to sorcery, alchemy, and Islam—all of which were associated with Satan. Slimy, primordial creatures crawl from the murky depths of a stagnant pool. An ominous foreboding of events to transpire, the "elixir of life" becomes the amniotic fluid of evil. In the *Eden* panel, the Tree of Knowledge, or Tree of

Good and Evil, is entwined by the serpent which is destined to tempt the unsuspecting Adam and Eve and betray their relationship with God. The fruit which sustains physical life and gives pleasure is subverted to symbolize lust, spiritual alienation, remorse, and death. In medieval theology, the apocalyptic vision of Revelations is a continuous event.

The humanist temperament of the Renaissance gave a new, Christianized meaning to the pagan myths and legends of antiquity. The political and theological morass of the Middle Ages was being revitalized by the emerging optimism of the new age. Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* is a symbolic reference to the Platonic cycle and the reunification of the physical with the metaphysical, the passage from the temporal and earthly to a more contemplative, eternal plane—the transcendence of man from his physical world through intellect and reason to a higher, supernatural realm. According to Umberto Baldini, the painting is intended to be read from right to left and the figures are considered to represent a kind of rural calendar constructed according to the months of agricultural activity (omitting winter).

Another interpretation of the *Primavera* by Mirella Levi D'Ancona concludes from the symbolism of the plants and their association with various historical figures that the painting was completed for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco's wedding on July 19, 1482. Significantly, this date fell on a Friday, the day sacred to Venus. Aureoled in myrtle, the plant of marriage, this goddess dominates the scene as she presides over the occasion. Venus also evokes a symbolic reference to water for, according to legend, the goddess Venus Anadyomene rose from the sea and was carried ashore by a pair of Zephyrs.

The Neo-Platonic interpretation illustrates the three types of love distinguished by Marsilio Ficino, *amor ferinus*, *humanus*, and *divinus* (carnal, human, and divine love). Love, impelled to earth by Passion, is changed to Beauty as represented by Chloris and Zephyr. In the dance of the Three Graces, Love is transmuted, or "converted," to a

higher plane (Chastity, between Beauty and Pleasure, turns her back on worldly things). Finally, Love, guided by Mercury, returns to the highest, ideal sphere.

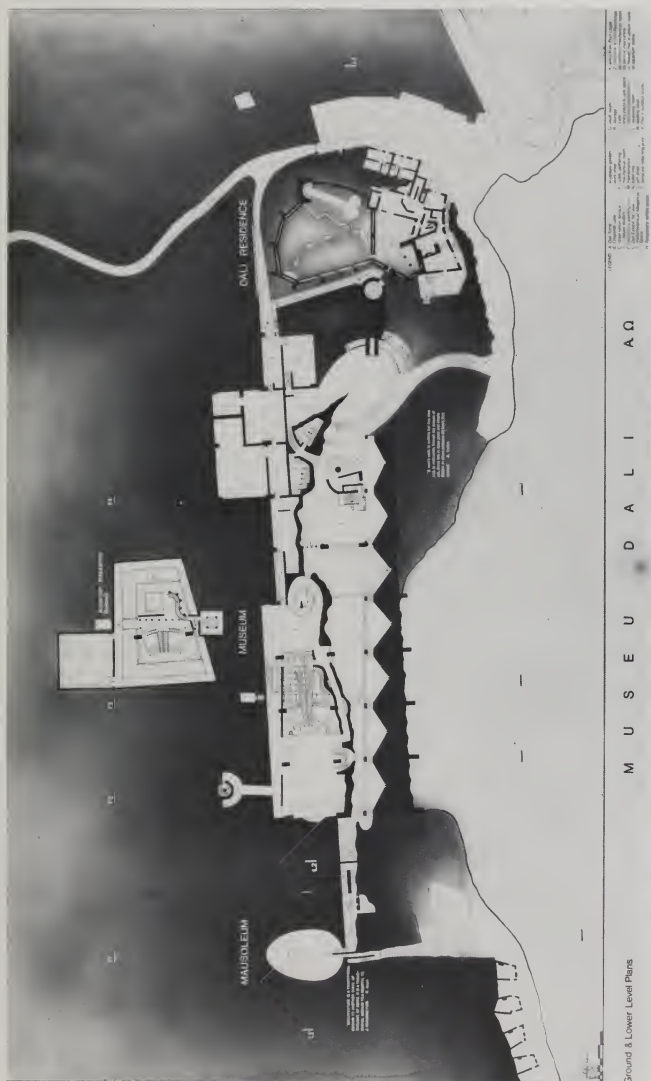
In *Paradise as a Garden* Elizabeth Moynihan writes that one of the oldest types of Christian mystical experiences was a "nostalgia for paradise" or man's repeated attempt to establish the paradise situation lost at the dawn of time. It is recalled in the Age of Humanism by what Ficino called the "nostalgia for something lost." The symbolic transformation of the "barren landscape" of Masaccio's Expulsion into a verdant earthly paradise garden is a reinstatement of man's desire for a mystical reunification with the original paradise and recurs throughout oriental and occidental art and architecture. The myth of eternal return is reflected in Indian philosophy as equating the primeval beginning with the final reward recounting the paradise myth and the garden of paradise as a heavenly paradise.

The spiritual and metaphysical dimension of the paradise garden was preserved through the Middle Ages within the cloisters of the monasteries. Here contemplation and theological debate elevated man above his temporal state and brought him in closer communion with God. In the humanist gardens of the Renaissance villas the mystical cycle of eternal return could be symbolically reenacted through the transcendent dialogues of the Platonic Academy. The *giardino segreto* became the "garden within the garden" where one could seek solace and isolation from the temptations and distractions of the outside world. A "room within a room," the *giardino segreto*, contained by trees with its ubiquitous fountain, was a world unto itself, isolated and remote, where the cosmic triumvirate, God, Man, and Nature, could be reunited once again in celestial harmony.



Notes

- 1 Hartt, Frederick *History of Italian Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* Harry N. Abrams (New York) 1969, p. 162.
- 2 Moynihan, Elizabeth B. *Paradise as a Garden in Persia and Mughal India* George Braziller (New York) 1979, p. 2.
- 3 In *Italian Gardens* (Harry N. Abrams, New York) Georgina Masson writes that Pompeian gardens were usually of two types—either a courtyard garden in the colonnaded peristyle of the house where plants grew in pots or vases or small beds surrounding a pool or piscina, or, in houses where there was only a small central courtyard, a portico opened onto the garden of xystus behind the house.
- 4 Masson *Italian Gardens*, p. 51.
- 5 Baldini, Umberto *Primavera: The Restoration of Botticelli's Masterpiece* Harry N. Abrams (New York) 1984, p. 30.
- 6 The terms “fractional naturalism” and “Gothic naturalism” are used by A. Richard Turner in *The Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1966) to convey the narrative technique of the medieval artists in illustrating a story with serial imagery and their scrupulous attention to specific anatomical and physical detail.
- 7 In northern Europe, the date of the painting, c.1500, can still be considered the Middle Ages, while in the south it is clearly the Renaissance.
- 8 Beagle, Peter S. *The Garden of Earthly Delights* Viking Press (New York) 1982, p. 4.
- 9 *ibid.*, pp. 40-41.
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 46.
- 11 For a more comprehensive and scholarly interpretation of Bosch's medieval symbolism refer to Dirk Bax's *Hieronymus Bosch: His Picture-Writing Deciphered* (Rotterdam, 1979).
- 12 Beagle *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, p. 45.
- 13 Baldini *Primavera*, p. 90.
- 14 Coffin, David R. *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* Princeton University Press 1979, p. 10.
- 15 Masson *Italian Gardens*, p. 75.
- 16 Baldini *Primavera*, p. 14.



Architecture as Cultural Artifact:

Conception, Perception (Deception?)

Julia W. Robinson
University of Minnesota

Abstract

In this working paper the ideas of dialectics and relativity are used to develop a model of architectural theory.¹ The essay explains why existing contributions made from an anthropological perspective are not incorporated into architectural theory, and how they could significantly contribute to it.

Anthropological Views and Architectural Theory

The tie between the disciplines of architecture and anthropology can be intuitively seen by those familiar with both. Nevertheless, after almost twenty years of study in the area of overlap, built form, and culture, contributions and insights have not been integrated with architectural theory in any significant way. This working paper uses the anthropological ideas of dialectic and relativity to develop a model of architectural theory. The model graphically represents the relationships between the various positions taken by architectural theorists, and locates the areas where anthropological approaches contribute to this body of theory. Starting from this model, the paper addresses the question why these contributions, while not rejected, are not explicitly dealt with by architectural theorists. It further discusses how the development of architectural theory can be significantly enhanced by studies of built form and culture.

The present view of architectural theory seems to be (according to my discussions with Lobell, Moore, Norberg-Schulz, and Seamons, 1985) that it consists of a variety of

competing views of architecture which are in opposition to one another. Applying the principle of relativity to these theoretical stances provides a way of seeing architectural theory in which a plurality of views coexist, each presenting a "true" perspective, and all together providing a more complete understanding than any one alone. Thus for architectural theory, no single perspective is seen as adequate for a complete understanding, but all together create a more comprehensive description.

But it is not sufficient to state that the various theoretical positions are complementary; a model needs to be provided which shows how the positions are related. Descriptors commonly used to delineate opposite ways of seeing architecture can be used to define a field of architectural theory. The paired words have a dialectic relationship; a theoretical position is located in tension between the two ways of seeing. The field thus formed allows the various positions to be seen relative to one another. Using the idea of plythetic dimensions discussed by Rapoport (forthcoming), these dimensions may not apply to all theories, nor do all theories necessarily fall precisely within the limited dimensions discussed here. Nonetheless, this provides a way to see as a unity the body of work which exists and to envision questions which remain unexplored.

Conception-Perception

Presently, architectural theory falls primarily within two realms, that of the designer, which

provides insight into the ways to create the architectural object, and that of the historian, which describes or explains the artifact once created. Although some recent work is fairly successful in attempting to bridge the gap in architectural theory between the created object and the process of creation with a measure of success (Venturi, Scott-Brown, and Izenour, 1972; Kostof, 1985), these works retain certain premises which are flawed in serious ways. The implied definition of architecture and the approach to evaluating it do not reflect a broad understanding of culture.

Most architectural theoreticians have seen the architectural artifact as a work of art whose prime purpose is to express the artistic vision of the designer. In this sense, the architectural artifact is to be viewed primarily as a conception of the architect, and it is to be evaluated accepting the stated or implied intentions of the designer. The forms are assumed to be expressions of the intentions. References made to temporal and social context are usually used to explain the author's intentions. In this way architectural theory accepts the view of architecture as a phenomenon created by architects, and judges it as an object of "high culture" rather than as an artifact which participates in the dialogue of culture in general.

The anthropologist looks at the architectural artifacts broadly, as phenomena which represent the ideology of a culture, and which manifest social values. Architecture is seen as encompassing built forms whether designed by people who call themselves architects or by others, thus including the various forms of popular or vernacular design as well as "high" architecture. This is an important point because this view places importance on the nature of the objects and the context more than authorhood. The anthropologist is concerned about knowing how ordinary people use and understand the architectural artifact, and what cultural behaviors and attitudes are supported by the form of built environment. Insofar as the architect and the architectural theoreticians limit their interest to the conception, to the intentions which created the artifact and not

to whether they are communicated by the artifact, the discipline of architecture is engaged in an act of narcissism and self-deception. Viewing architecture as both a cultural and an artistic medium potentially produces an architecture which will be meaningful not only within the discipline but also to the society as a whole.

Bringing together these two points of view (architecture as designer intentions and architecture as medium for cultural ideas) juxtaposes two perspectives on form and ideology which can be described using three sets of terms: conception (making) and perception (interpretation); deduction or rationality and induction or intuition; and the values of professionals and those of lay people. As stated earlier, these modes do not necessarily form a complete picture, and for purposes of clarity, positions have been oversimplified (for example, when theoreticians are located in the model, it is in reference to a specific work rather than the complete body of work). Also, while the model allows a simultaneous view of the positions, it is important to note that valid philosophical differences may make some positions mutually untenable. But like the gestalt vase-faces image, for which only one view can be held in the mind at any given moment, the "truth" is a paradox in which both images coexist. Similarly, in architectural theory the plurality of views results in a richer, more complete understanding of architecture.

We have discussed the differences between the view of built form as a process of making the artifact or the process of understanding the artifact. Represented in the model as conception and perception with an interstice representing their integration (see diagram 1), these two perspectives ask very different questions, and in fact adopt very different theoretical approaches. A particular case currently is the debate between the semiologists and the phenomenologists. While these two approaches have very different roots philosophically, the real difference between the approaches when applied to architectural theory lies in the nature of the questions the proponents are asking. While architectural phenomenolo-

gists ask, "What does architecture mean?," the semiologists ask, "How does architectural form communicate meaning?" For the most part, the phenomenological view is presently taken by those who are interested in looking at the artifact, while the semiological view is taken by those who are interested in designing the artifact. While the debate rages about the fundamental philosophical differences of the two groups, the fact that they are each providing valid answers to different questions is clouded. Furthermore, for a useful architectural theory, both perspectives are necessary.

Compounding this difference is one which can best be described, if somewhat oversimplified, by the traditional distinction which has been made between inductive/intuitive approaches (based on subjective observation) and deductive/rational approaches (based on empirical evidence and logical deduction) to both design and interpretation of architecture. In the case of the semiologists, we find the designer-oriented theorists interested in rational approaches (Jencks, 1969; Broadbent, 1969; Eco, 1973). In contrast, the phenomenologist approach taken by some historians (Lobell, 1979; Norberg-Schulz, 1985), which rejects the duality of mind and body implied by traditional empiricism, is rooted in intuitive understanding. Therefore, while semiologists are moving toward ways to integrate the conceptual and the perceptual in creating design, and phenomenologists are becoming interested in ways to design phenomenologically, the groups continue to operate in discrete but complementary areas.

Deception and Architecture as Cultural Artifact

The anthropological approach to the architectural artifact (along with most other environment-behavior approaches) sees the built environment as a medium for the communication and propagation of cultural ideas. Specific behaviors are supported, and social structures become represented by the characteristic making of the artifact, which perpetuates cultural actions and attitudes, is linked with perception (here used in its broadest sense to incorporate interpretation)

of the artifact (thus to the communication of the ideas to the society at large), the nature of the built environment as a medium for culture becomes evident. The architectural artifact then is understandable as a force which supports either perpetuation of cultural norms or of cultural change. This view implies a responsibility on the part of the designer to be aware of the values implied by particular forms.

With increased research on the actual performance of the architectural artifact (such as in areas of energy or environment-behavior), we have the opportunity to inform design with research, bringing together the conceptual aspects of architecture with the perceptual. If these two aspects of architecture are not integrated, the design act will become one of willful rather than inadvertent self-deception as in the past. So long as architects are content to consider as their arena of operation only the conceptual aspects of design, they can ignore the political and moral consequences of their work. This is what the current architectural debate is beginning to address, and what is at the heart of the matter. We now have the means for self-examination by looking at the outcome of our work. Will predominant architectural theory continue to discuss proportional systems, architectural styles, and topological characteristics without regard to their relevance beyond the elite few?

The architectural artifact is a manifest intention (Norberg-Schulz, 1963). Embodied within it are many ideas which derive from many sources. But it is important to realize that the intentions within this cultural artifact are not necessarily coincidental with the intentions of the designer or builder. As cultural beings we carry with us myriad levels of cultural ideas, many of which we are not conscious. These unconscious cultural ideas form the figure against which the ground of consciousness plays. And for the perception of the object as well, the cultural context is ground to the architectural figure. Thus the architectural artifact embodies many cultural interests, only some of which we know consciously.

The conception of architectural artifacts is, by its nature, extraordinarily complex, as the number of elements which go into the built structure is very large. In a society which has a tradition of building, the complexity of the conceptual design process is managed by traditional ways of accomplishing the design and construction of architecture. For example, the type of building to be constructed is identified. The set of types from which any culture may select may vary, but the notion of type, whether designated by function (shelter from a humid, hot climate), style (art deco), or icon (temple), is a common way of managing information. Systems are used to guide the placement of buildings; for example, these may be ritualistic (orientation to the cardinal points), economic (near the market), or customary (the house always faces the street). Such systems serve to limit the infinite number of possibilities and direct decision-making so that in one conscious decision many unconscious choices are also made.

The construction process, too, is controlled by this means. The materials, the ways of putting them together, are subordinate to a system. Because the human mind is limited in what it can consciously manipulate at any one time, these systems and categories allow control of a complex process. Thus, in the process of conceptualizing architecture, there is a difference between those choices which are consciously made and the larger set of responses which happen as a result of the unconscious outcomes embedded in the system (building-code categories have implications for organization of space, materials, etc.).

In contrast to simpler societies, where the conceptual process, the construction process, and the process of inhabiting the built forms are closely allied, the specialization of Western culture has created segmentation. While the architectural profession emerged to be responsible for environments in the public realm, the abstract conceptions and geometrical proportional systems of the architect were modified and formalized by craftspeople who applied a tradition of construction and cultural con-

tent to the built product, thus mediating and enriching the formal ideas. While this method of building was segmented, the mediating effect of the craftspeople allowed the unconscious cultural ideas to be maintained.

In the early twentieth century, the value base of Western culture was called into question. As the traditional architecture carried cultural messages of dominance now seen as negative, the traditional mode of construction was rejected and a new one was gradually put into place. This rejection of the traditional model of construction was perhaps the most powerful cultural alteration that took place.

In turning away from the Beaux Arts and the traditional mode of construction, and in the rejection of the vernacular, while attempts were made to create an architecture with a new ethic, what also occurred was a rejection of the cultural unconscious which lay within the traditional forms, in exchange for an architectural process which attempted to be fully conscious. But because the mind is limited in what it can consciously manipulate, the resultant architecture was abstract, even empty. The unity between construction and conception was recognized, but the tie with perception and actual use was ignored. It would be misleading to think that all traditional forms embodied negative cultural values, or to think that architects of the modern movement were able to operate in a cultural vacuum. While architects rejected the construction processes and formal representations of the cultural tradition, they were not able to escape from most of the cultural categories for buildings which existed. Therefore, they built schools, churches, hospitals, and mental institutions with only slight modifications to the socially constructed building programs. And the entry of the architect into the housing arena must be specifically mentioned because a large part of the difficulty with modern housing can be attributed to the application of architectural values originally derived for the public realm to the design of buildings for private use.

The increased distancing of the architectural profession from generally held values exacerbated by the loss of traditional construction techniques makes it imperative that designers be concerned not simply with their own perspective, but with the perspective of laypersons. The awareness of the cultural dimension of architecture, and the techniques for cultural analysis inherent in the anthropological approach, can provide new directions and content for architectural theory. By overlapping the last dimensions of the architectural field, the descriptors "professional perspective" and "lay perspective," with the former dimensions, we can see how different approaches to the lay perspective may elucidate the professional perspective. Additionally, we can see how different approaches to the study of the lay perspective relate to each other.

Two works which deal primarily with the lay perspective are Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein (1968), and Rapoport (1982). In *Pattern Language*, for example, Alexander et al. start from the perspective of the conception of the artifact. The authors describe in an intuitive way the values of the layperson as they are tied to the design of the architectural artifact. But at the same time, the authors are interested in scientific evidence to support or negate the thesis, thereby implying an inherent concern with the perception of the artifact. Rapoport, on the other hand, starts from a consideration of the created artifact and a concern with the origins of it. He is also interested in scientific evidence to support his thesis, and sees the perception of the artifact as inherently tied to its conception.

Phenomenological theorists such as Bachelard (1969) and Tuan (1977) interpret setting from a personal as well as interpersonal perspective based on cultural ideas, which locates their interest as in the lay perspective on the perceptual side. While the interpretations provided are from documented sources, these authors are not concerned with statistical or other ways to substantiate them, but instead view each personal account as valid on its own terms. For this reason, they are placed on the intuitive

side of the field. Tuan's interest in conceptions which make the environment as well as those which provide interpretation places him as more integrated with the conceptual than Bachelard.

Certain semiologists are also concerned with the lay perspective in ways that relate it to the professional perspective (Jencks, 1969; Eco, 1973; Broadbent, 1974; Bonta, 1979; Krampen, 1979; and others). They are aware that the lay perception is an essential part of the functioning of architecture. What the anthropological view adds to such semiological work is a cross-cultural theoretical framework which explains how architecture functions simultaneously as art and as part of the ordinary.

Tafuri writes of the importance of architecture as "indifferent object" (1976). Rapoport points out that architecture communicates a consistent message by means of the redundancy between architectural features (1977). But it is through dissonance that we perceive inconsistency and bring to consciousness aspects of the cultural pattern which we normally do not see (Robinson, forthcoming). Thus dissonance plays a role in challenging existing cultural patterns, in doing other than perpetuating the status quo. This is what the real role of art can be. In defining architecture as an artistic endeavor, we then speak of a far more profound impact than simple stylistic variation. Architecture as an art, which challenges what exists, is by its very nature set against the background of the ordinary.

Architecture, when conceived as a cultural artifact in the anthropological sense, presents itself as a complex phenomenon which can be looked at from many diverse points of view. Because the discipline of anthropology addresses not only questions of aesthetics and art, but also those of daily experience and human activity, it is a potentially potent perspective from which to see an integrated architectural theory. And, the application of the methods of anthropology to architectural questions offers many new fruitful directions.

Note

1 This paper is a slightly modified version of an invited working paper published in Carswell, J. W., and Saile, D. G., *Purposes in Built Form and Culture Research* (Proceedings of the 1986 International Conference on Built Form and Culture Research, Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas). Because this essay is a rough conceptual sketch, written to engender discussion and debate, many of the points in this paper are not developed in the depth they deserve.

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Urban Proportions

Dragos Patrascu

Skidmore, Owings
and Merrill
Chicago

These notes have been inspired by travel in northern Italy, made possible by a grant from the School of Architecture of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The initial intention was to study some of the historic urban spaces described by Camillo Sitte and by Rob Krier, and to eventually develop an understanding of the relation between typological aspects (which captured Sitte's and Krier's attention) and surface treatments (patterns, textures, rhythms, etc.).

My basic premises are that social interaction in non-institutionalized spaces (like the street and the city square) is good and necessary for the community; also, that traditional cities (classical or medieval) have developed the most fully achieved forms of public spaces that suit this interaction and, for this reason, a democratic urban life. The virtue of these cities appears to rest in their being urban continuums, or fine mixings of uses that stand in sharp contrast with our current zoning regulations. And for its dwellers, the physical and functional urban continuum encourages the formation of the social continuum; this seems to be the medium where democracy is at ease.

In terms of architectural typology, these combined urban and social structures generated unity. Vitruvius and the architectural treatises of the Renaissance described the city square almost as a building in itself, with walls and gates. Moreover, its being an enclosure made it similar to the predominant residential type of the

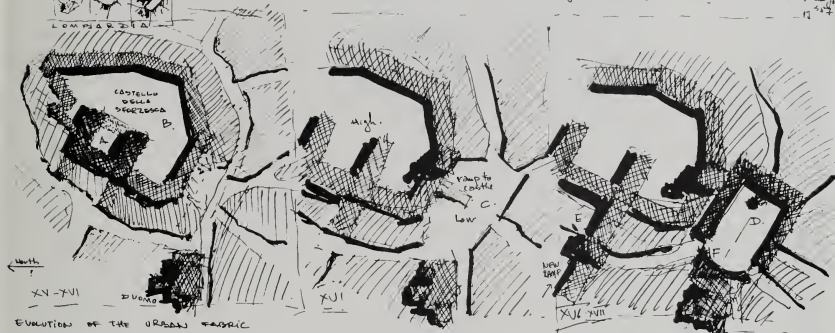
Mediterranean cultures, which was the courtyard dwelling. The square was the living room of the communal house, which was the city; Alberti, I believe, said that the city was nothing but a large house and the house a small city.

Although so much has been said already against Modernist urbanism, I will stress that an important shift in our idea of open public spaces is due to the cubist endeavor to "know" an object by turning around it and then composing a representation of its multiple facets. In cities, this approach put the weight on the building and wrapped the public space around it. In contrast, the traditional approach was to wrap buildings around a square, like walls around an "urban room."

The Mediterranean: rocky shores deeply carved, warm air and bright light, dust and, above all, the presence of something, somebody one cannot see but which nevertheless is there. The Etruscan heads of the funeral urns of Chiusi or from the Villa Giulia in Roma, on Isabella's shoulders . . . without the mysterious smile of her ancestors whose painted clay pupils contemplate the absolute in the underground tombs of Tarquinia. A middle-aged man with a boy on a train heading toward Napoli, late afternoon in the Campania. The shape of the head, nose, chin, and the deep furrows at the nostrils resemble the portraiture of the late Republican period. The living Roman bust is not wrapped in a toga; instead he wears slacks, a white shirt, and talks softly to the boy. Under the

VIGEVANO

1.14.2 "Luisenro" also ordered the repair of Vigbarro to fear down the old market place and to rebuild it after the plans of his engineer (mistake) Ambrosio de Curtis. 1954



- The square fortification (one side missing), probably built on the location of a Roman castrum, dates back to the Middle Ages.

- 1486 - Portuguese enlarges the castle of Lobosia
B/1 Nov to its current perimeter.

At that time, there was no major (either formal) open space in front of the 10th century Dvarana. at the bottom of the figure.

ROMAN 74- 1986 1992



- g/ The space in front of the house is cleared up to create a "vestibule" to the castle. A large tower and arched access ramp, together w/ the facade of the house, dominate the open space.

- D / 1492-1494. The old market place in front of the Ducal Palace is replaced w/ a formal arcade (attributed to Bramante, ordered by Isabella II). The access ramp to the castle is replaced w/ a stairway connecting the arcade w/ the tower.

- ii/ A war ramp/covered/ is built to allow the access of horses to the castle.

- ±/ the ~~monument~~ receives a new facade (1630'), on the axis of the formal plaza.

shallow layer of fat that smooths his features, I discern a lineage of coins, reliefs, and statues, and of lasting human forms and attitudes which have never died on this land. The sounds of classical antiquity are here, diffused in the canon of the latecomers, from the sixth-century Lombards to the eighteenth-century Austrians, and lately mixed with the noise of industry and media. People live busy lives here. Travelers, who number in the millions, flood their cities, archaeological sites, and beaches every summer, with a high tide in July and August. They are everywhere, from the depths of the earth in Etruscan tombs, Roman sewers or catacombs, to the top of the mountains, riding a jeep up on Etna to look over the volcano's edge. Yet, it isn't hard to escape them all. There are lonely corners in Pompeii where one can sit on the sidewalk and listen. The stones were lined up some 20

centuries ago. They are still, but the leaves of the tree across the street move with the wind. Men, too, become what you make of them. They move, talk, and so do you, but everything seems to have happened already and you know it will happen again. It is as if every ruined streetcorner had its own frozen crowd, as old (or timeless) as the stones. We travelers slip into these human shells and for a moment look through their orbits at the landscape and at the other human shells where other travelers hide. Was it I, trying to escape the 2:00 p.m. sun on a Thursday at the Villa Adriana, who ran straight to a massive brick wall and to the cave-like shade I was anticipating behind it? Did the girl who was hiding there, eating a sandwich, believe me when I stated my name, profession, and purpose? And was she really German, from Hamburg, as she thought she was and told



me? Or, rather, was it the reiteration of a timeless encounter which lasted five minutes on my Timex but might as well have lasted forever at that very spot, or maybe we are still there. . . ? Can one experience a thing and its opposite at the same time? Is it a play of my perception, this "alter ego" who I feel has deserted this ruined home one second before I turn the corner? His breath is in the air, the sand still retains his footprints, and I wonder why the guide is trying so hard to convince us that the place has been empty for some 2,000 years.

I cannot think of a word to describe the ambiguous feeling about past and present I always have when seeing remnants of Greek or Roman social life. Indeed, a notion is usually described by the features which include it in a larger class and by those which make it singular. In this case, the class is time and the notions we are trying to define are past, present, and future. In my aforementioned experiences, it became futile to conjugate the verb "to be." Historic differences faded away or seemed irrelevant; what emerged, rather, were those mechanisms, values, and spaces of social life we have retained from classical antiquity and which still are the foundations of Western Civilization. Hence the purpose of his journey is revealed to the traveler: "Journeys to relive your past?" was the Khan's question at this point, a question which could also have been formulated: 'Journeys to recover your future?' And Marco's answer was: 'Elsewhere is a negative mirror. The Traveler recognizes the little that is his, discovering the much he has not had and will never have.'¹

The Negative Mirror

Marco's mirror has the property to reveal cities in a very unpredictable way. It works, more or less, like one of the concave parabolic surfaces used to concentrate the parallel rows of solar rays into a unique point, giving them a previously unknown shining. In a similar way the traveler's gaze will bend the apparently isolated and indifferent facets of a place and tie them together into a more intense reality. We believe that, in doing so, he reveals the "genius loci," which is a projection of human conscience. Once a place displays traces of habitation (past or present) it becomes teleonomic, i.e., illustrative of an intention which is always the print of human action. Moreover, this human "intention" can be found even in the natural landscape, as in the traditional toponymy of mountain peaks, rivers, woods, etc. The ancient geographical names often refer to characters and events which work according to the finalist causality typical of mythical thought. What is then the nature of the "intention," this human print inextricably related to the concept of place?

Let us think of a city. It would be superfluous to seek the "genius loci" in its quantifiable elements alone. Indeed, one may count the buildings, measure and classify them, establish a typology, and finally test the forms against the background physical conditions; even so, one may be unable to explain how, among the multitude of acceptable solutions, a particular one came to be adopted. It would be difficult to tell why, for instance, some people choose to lock the front door whereas others enter the building through the roof and pull up the ladder. Two factors enter our description here: first, that most often, people looked for one of the technically acceptable solutions rather than for the optimal one; second, that their formal choices ultimately rested upon some peculiar representation of the world, other than a scientific or technical one. These representations have a redemptive content, and this brings architecture under the incidence of ethics. Architecture is political.

staging of human interaction. Its privileged location is the city; here, due to the proximity of individuals, the relationships they establish are more dense and more complex than anywhere else, and so are the spaces and buildings which support them.

Amos Rapoport shows how clustering (on ethnic, economic, or sociocultural criteria) is a quasi-natural adaptive response of people in any urban agglomeration. "In large cities, people are constantly exposed to other people and their artifacts; an area of people with similar behavioral, spatial and artifactual codes provides a retreat, reduces stress and eliminates conflict."² The geometric nature of urban clusters is that of dense perimetal arrangements of individual units surrounding an open common area; this took shape, traditionally, in the city square, which, in its quintessential quality of civic space, is proposed as the object of this study.

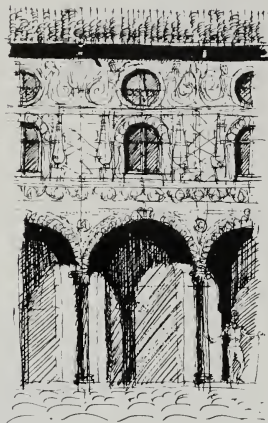
If architecture is to support and enhance human experiences, it becomes congruent with the motivations of behavior: the search for survival, security, fulfillment of the Self, and interaction. Man has, therefore, erected around himself, adaptive forms in the broadest sense, forms to enable him to exist, contemplate himself and interact with others. It is far beyond the limits of these notes to explore the reciprocal influences of behavior and built environment. Rather, I would concentrate on the architectural



la facciata originale del primo (Figura Cinquecentesca) tras discesa
 toward Levante (1647?)

Architetto di 2^a facciata barocca (1690) è il vescovo Cammuel + colonnade? (colonnade?)

vedendo il loro uso appropriato al loro scopo. The
 addition in order to make the location of the
 colonnade possible (in order to create an entrance to
 the castle).



Camillo Sitte, in his *Art of Building Cities* of 1889, described numerous Western European squares and analyzed the esthetic and historic reasons for their successful performance. Although as early as 1944 Eliel Saarinen welcomed the English translation of the book, Sitte's principles seem to have gained credibility with currently practicing architects mostly through the writings and projects of the latter Neo-Rationalists. The ensuing sympathy for classical and medieval urban architecture was, or rather should have been, at the convergence of two bodies of knowledge: one, esthetic, which would seek in previous epochs good composition rules that helped design spaces for a sane social life; the other, ideologic, concerned with the values which made social life sane. We can see how, without trying to be a form of revolution, architecture could at least aim at being a form of public education. We have

witnessed instead, in the joyful ranks of the Post Modernists, a hedonistic tendency toward quickly and affordably gratifying themselves and their clients with fragments of prestige, power, or mystery, seemingly salvaged from a wreck of classical architecture. To what extent the traditional understanding of civic life as the noblest form of human order should lend its architecture to a "learning from Las Vegas" type of situation, and whether a pediment, column, etc., created to be part of an ordered whole, should be used by itself with no regard for its modular nature, are questions to be answered from case to case.

Elsewhere is a negative mirror—Sitte, Rossi, Krier, and others have found it in the study of traditional Western cities, and we will try to reiterate their journey. But, before approaching the places they mentioned, what

PARMA
EMILIA-ROMAGNA

P I A Z Z A D E L D U O M O

JULY 16

The center of the piazza is empty, the historic disposition of masses on the perimeter creates focal points (Italy's historical center + tower) therefore, of different types do not line up. Asymmetry creates dynamism. The transition of some of the interior spaces of adjacent buildings are composed of light or dark space (Italy's perfect example of urban form)

Piazza del Duomo

Piazza del Duomo

VEKOVADY

P. DUOMO

BATTISTERO

Piazza Duomo

Duomo - first finished in 1046. Rebuilt after the 1117 earthquake slightly modified Campanile built in 1294. Romanesque style
Battistero - started in Roman style in 1166. Finished in 1260 in Gothic (original)

should be the lines of thought that will organize one's perception? First, there is the urban environment seen as a "locus." This concept seeks the intrinsic nature of architecture in the dialectic of social life and built forms, on the background motive of reciprocal metamorphosis of past and present. "Locus... we understand the relationship, at the same time particular and universal, established between a certain specific location and the buildings that are in it."³ What is the domain of application of this relation? It is the city seen as a moving reality, at the intersection of dialectic pairs of facts. "This opposition... manifests itself, in different ways, in the relationship between the public and the private spheres, in the antagonism between the elaboration of a rational project of urban architecture and the values of locus of the place, in the public buildings and in the private buildings."⁴ Finally, the depository of

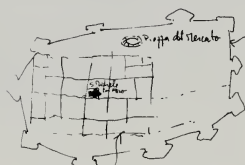
all these creative conflicts is the collective memory, itself in permanent dialectic adjustment with the spirit of order of the time: "The collective memory becomes at last the transformation of space in the works of the collectivity, a transformation that is always conditioned by whatever material realities oppose it."⁵ And so the continuity of the city in time is established.

Second, the urban environment considered in its formal characteristics led to a tentative formulation of a correct geometry of the city. The preeminence of geometry implies the vision of the city as a stage set for the human existence. Man cannot fulfill himself in isolation but only within the ordered whole of the community, the same way a limb cannot function when severed from the body. The flow of visible social and cultural forms is pushed aside to reveal a deeper stratum of

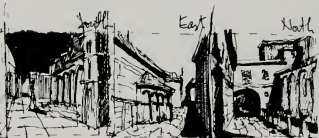
civic behavior and ensuing general human values. Because they are generalities, applicable to most human associations, these can be formalized in terms of proportion between the One and the Multiple, and finally can be given a spatial shell. "The aesthetic value of the different spatial types is as independent of short-lived functional concerns as it is of symbolic interpretations which may vary from one age to the next",⁶ rather, the geometry of the spatial type is based on formal logic relations inferred by the interaction of the One and the Multiple. What is intrinsic to a space is not its usage nor its symbolism, but its geometry. Moreover, in a society where there is no divorce between the private and public spheres, similar spatial arrangements (although different in scale) will respond to the pursuits of the citizen and to those of the community. For instance, in classical Mediterranean lifestyle, the family

interaction took place around the courtyard (at the core of the dwelling) and the community interaction happened in a similar but larger structure, such as the agora, or forum (at the core of the city). In such cases "we might almost infer the existence of a kind of social ritual, which produces a perfect match between the individual and the collectivity."⁷ In the Aristotelian tradition politics embodies this social ritual, by regulating the interaction of private and public interests under the reign of justice: "... the real difference between man and other animals is that humans alone have perception of good and evil, of just and unjust, etc. It is the sharing of a common view in these matters that makes a household and a state,"⁸ and "the virtue of justice is a feature of the state, for justice is the arrangement of the political association. . . ."⁹ The highest form of political association is the state,

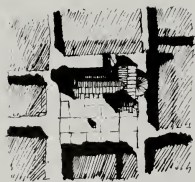
Lucca / Chiesa San Michele a la chiesa di San Michele in Foro / July 14.



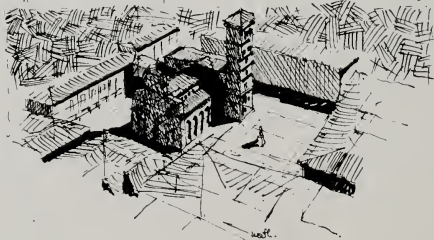
Roman Castrum



the church is located off the center of the piazza and therefore defines four "spaces", each of them related to a different direction of the church. (Camillo Sitte)



- Chiesa San Michele
- Church San Michele in Foro
- style pisano-lucchese. Construction begins in 1142. 13th century: completion of the right nave, campanile and facade. 14th century: end of construction. Abundant use of the main nave, especially done with the erection of the dome.

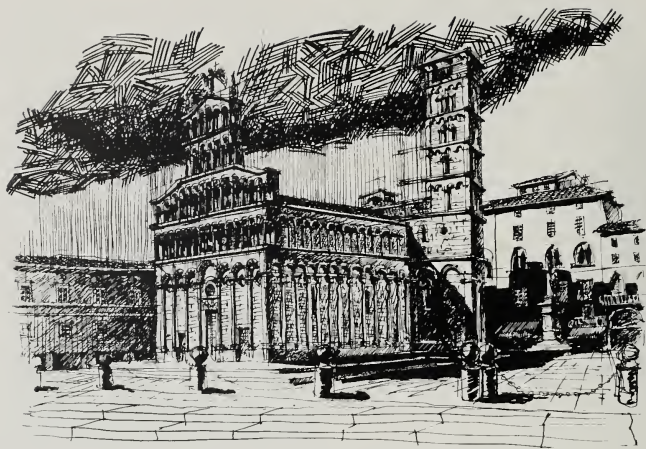


whose hub is the polis, and so we can reformulate this, in architectural terms: in the Classical tradition geometry embodies the social ritual, by regulating the interaction of the One and the Multiple, under the reign of proportion (or, more precisely, symmetry in the Vitruvian sense, as we shall see later). If we accept the identity of values and consequent behavior at individual and civic levels ("household and state") it becomes logical to seek a correspondent architectural unity for the settings of private and public lives. Sitte, Krier, and the Neo-Rationalists searched for this unity in traditional urbanism (of Greek and Roman ascent) and so were compelled to rehabilitate voids, i.e., streets and squares, as spaces for living and civic interaction. In order to give them the identity of "places" (and the shape of "urban rooms") the urban blocks which define the edges of streets and squares again became solid and homogeneous. And so, the continuity of the city in space was delineated.

A vision of the city as an urban continuum is emerging, on the basis of a clearly articulated geometry of urban blocks and public spaces whose layout is an ideogram of the "locus." Where do modern cities stand in relation to these facts? It is evident that many recent public spaces do not stimulate the kind of complex and eventful life that the traditional examples provide. One reason is that most of the rituals and events that used to gather the community (such as festivals, celebrations, games, and political activities) are now relegated to specialized indoor spaces which restrict potential behavioral patterns. The outdoor public space is mostly experienced as an itinerary from one destination to another and no longer as space for interaction. Our streets and squares have lost their capacity, both in terms of credibility and good form, to support social mixing and cultural improvisation. A second reason for the dullness of contemporary civic spaces is that much of the art of shaping them has been forgotten. Rather, practice has been (and still is, to a regrettable extent) a meaningless formalism, partially indebted to the academic concept of symmetry, partially due to the elimination of urban clusters by the



modern movement. The disenchantment of the Modernists with the cozy feeling of walled-in traditional streets and squares is notorious, and there is extensive evidence in postwar urbanism of their contribution to the dissolution of the family, neighborhood, and community concentric domains. In other words, they eliminated the successive steps that led the citizen from his threshold, through larger and larger social and corresponding spatial structures, to his final destination, the city hall. It is only fair to remember that if they did so, it was for humanitarian reasons. The ideal relationship of the citizen to his city was forgotten in the years after World War I, when large urban areas were the promiscuous habitat of the proletariat. Intervention was badly needed, and the Modernist architects attempted, within the limits which society impressed upon them, to give everyone an equal share of floor and sky areas. Their mass architecture, tangled up in the myths of industry and progress, joined forces with the streams of mass production, mass consumption, and mass communication to form together the megalopolis. For the individual



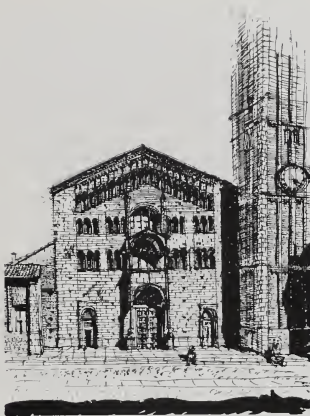
(whom we don't dare call a citizen anymore), the end benefit is the apoplectic sensation of stepping out of his private life into a world of transportation lines, chain stores, financial conglomerates, and round-the-clock media solicitation. We are far from the simplicity of the cluster in which Rapoport (see note 2) was seeking diminution of urban stress.

The contribution of the academists to the alteration of the geometry of traditional cities is more subtle. Camillo Sitte elaborately criticizes them, mostly from the position of the medieval planner who sought diversity. Meanwhile we have come to accept the rational repetitiveness of urban blocks, as in Cerda's plan for Barcelona, a system which Sitte seemed to reject. "The effective enclosures of space, deriving as it does from the historical evolution of an original unbroken street front (such as it still exists today in villages), continued to be the basis of all dispositions in the old towns. Modern city planning follows the opposite tendency of dissection into separate blocks (building block, piazza block, garden block), each one being clearly circumscribed by its street

frontage. From here develops a powerful force of habit: the desire to see every monument in the center of a vacant space."¹⁰ This vision of space as juxtaposed fragments (very different from the urban continuum described before) is related to a peculiar use of symmetry. Since its formulation in antiquity, symmetry responded to the concept that a composition should be a structured whole. For this purpose it needs a unifying rule that should establish similar relations between the whole and each of its parts as well as between the different parts themselves; "... it is not possible to combine two things properly without the third to act as a bond to hold them together. And the best bond is one that effects the closest unity between itself and the terms it is combining; and this is best done by a continued geometrical proportion."¹¹ From here derives the classical esthetic canon, as embodied in the concept of symmetry, which literally meant "with measure" in the original Greek. The rule of symmetry in architecture, understood as proportioning based on the analogy (not identity) of the parts in the composition, appears as a direct application

of Plato's statement to form-making. Vitruvius gives a formulation of the rule; for the argument he appeals to the human body as an ideal example of organized form whose symmetry is due to the likeness of its parts regulated by a common denominator, the module: "The ordinance of a building consists in the proportioning which is to be carefully observed by architects. Now, the proportion depends on the ratio the Greeks call analogy; and by ratio we understand the subordination of dimensions to the module, in the entire body of the work, insofar as all proportions are ruled, because a building will never be well ordered if it doesn't include this proportion and ratio and if all its parts are not in relation to each other like those of a human body well formed."¹² Beauty is to be found in that "which remains similar to itself in the diversity of evolution," or, more geometrically, in order which is unity within multiplicity.

This vision of freedom and cohesion largely differs from the compositional rules of the nineteenth century. Symmetry came to be understood as identity of respective parts, right and left of an axis. The tyranny of this concept impoverished the form, and turned the polyphony of the Greek symmetry into a single-line melody. It also impoverished the possibilities for exploring the space by making the central line the only relevant approach to it. It is interesting and it should be remembered that, due to its volitive formal qualities, axial symmetry has often organized space for the benefit of power. For this reason, the relation between civic life and spatial forms is most visible in times of change, when the multi-polar rule of democratic institutions turns into a one-party (or one-man) system, and the citizen becomes a subject. As an illustration, we can mention the significant changes in architecture and sculpture in the late Roman art at the end of the third century. The advent of axial symmetry coincided then with the centralization of power by the emperor, "... judge of the world, cosmocrator. ... Particularly characteristic of the new type of composition is the mechanical unity achieved by symmetry which around the year

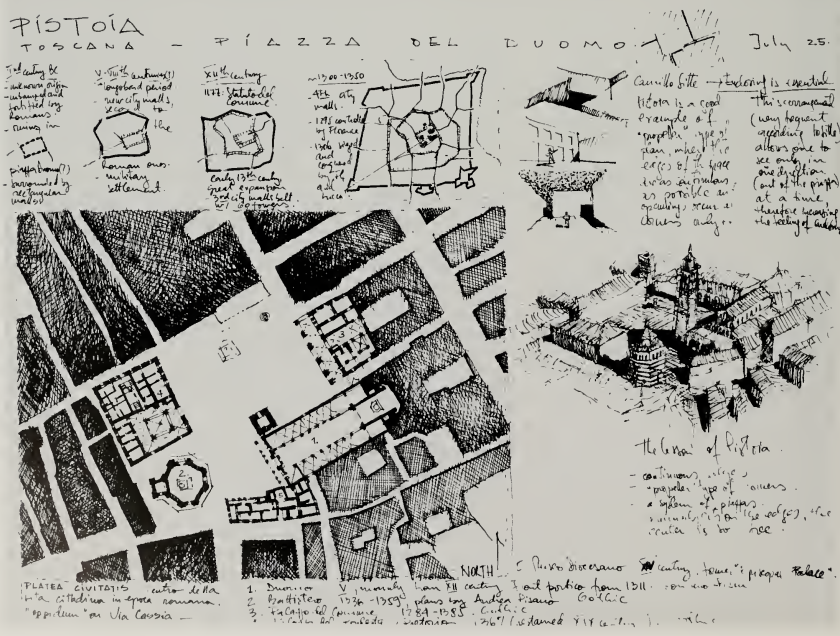


300 replaces the organic unity achieved by living group formations. In the reliefs of the Arch of Galerius in Thessalonika . . . the endeavor is manifest to symmetrize the composition around the Emperor. . . ."¹³ In the same way are approached architectural structures, as illustrated by the axial ensembles of the Early Christian basilicas and Diocletian's palace at Spoleto; one can see why such spaces, where the architect seems to hold the visitor's hand and lead him on a predetermined path, may be felt as simplistic and oppressive. In the best of cases, a modulation of perceptions occurs as one proceeds along the path (axis), almost as in an initiation journey: In some basilicas of the time, the capitals became increasingly complex as one approached the altar through the main nave. These are not spaces of freedom, but of implacable destiny.

While reviewing these facts, I have attempted to suggest that geometry is a decisive factor in the perception and utilization of space for social purposes. This is particularly true for the open civic spaces which are the subject of these notes. The streets and squares of traditional cities played the role of social catalysts: here people of different conditions and ideologies would meet, confront, and

adjust to each other in free and unpredictable associations. The ability of an urban space to allow or even enhance free interaction makes it suitable for the practice of democracy or, otherwise, indifferent or even adverse to it. It is true that democracy is not a consequence of but rather a cause for the existence of "spaces of freedom." Nevertheless, once the right political premises are established, the well-being of a community is influenced by the capacity of its citizens to interact, at least in a system which pursues the happiness of the majority. Whereas it appears that interaction now takes place now in narrowly institutionalized indoor spaces, with definite purposes which address specific strata of the society. The result may very well be a segregation of the community in restrictive user categories, to which people elect (or are forced) to belong according to their age,

education, wealth, etc. The elderly community, the low-income housing, even university campuses can achieve an unnatural separation of the social body. The child learn from the old, the poor redeems at the example of the lucky who, in turn, learns compassion from the unfortunate. It seems that interaction within mixed groups increases self-awareness and civic responsibility. At least the ancients believed so: "Plato ordained that in all crossways there should be spaces left for Nurses to meet with their Children. His Design in this Regulation was, I suppose, . . . that the Nurses themselves, by seeing one another, might grow neater and more delicate, and be less liable to Negligence among too many careful Observers in the Same Business. It is certain, one of the greatest Ornaments either of a Square or of a Crossway, is a handsome Portico, under which the





old Men may spend the Heat of the Day, or be mutually serviceable to each other; besides that, the Presence of the Fathers may deter and restrain the Youth, who are sporting and diverting themselves in another part of the Place, from the Mischievousness and Folly natural to their Age."¹⁴ By contrast, rather than encouraging people to confront and adjust to each other, current urban design and regulations tend to set them up in parallel worlds. Chances are that they will only meet at the supermarket. How can a community whose members avoid interaction and confrontation between age, cultural, economic, and other groups achieve tolerance and integration for all its members? If these are desirable goals, can architects, by a revision of urban regulations and design approaches, contribute to the creation of "spaces of democracy"?

We can now attempt to answer the question previously asked, namely, can historic urban spaces be a negative mirror to the weakness of social interaction in many of our cities? The answer can be an individual's and only his, as the travel that reveals it.

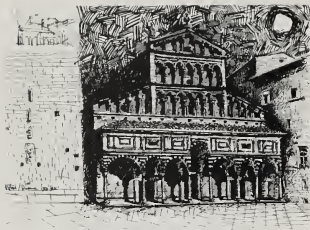
The Travel

... through Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, and Toscana, in the path of *The Art of Building Cities*.

Although a century old, it seems that Sitte's book has remained an unsurpassedly insightful and rich description of medieval city form. His approach to the subject is articulated by three elements of demonstration: a succinct presentation of antique urban spaces, followed by an analogy

between these and certain urban developments of the Middle Ages in central and southern Europe. Finally, a description of the compositional principles of numerous examples of medieval squares, sometimes including their historic evolution down to the baroque period. The work is completed with an elaborate criticism of modern (nineteenth-century) urbanism and consequent suggestions for improvement.

Sitte belongs to the broad category of humanists who believe that the fundamentals of our institutions are developments of forms initiated in Greco-Roman antiquity. In urbanism, these forms display with forceful clarity the relationship between a social ideal and its faithful, almost diagrammatic, translation into civic spaces. Sitte is attached to this social ideal, synonymous in the classical tradition with the purpose of the state and with its concentrated manifestation, the city. The city-state embodies a seductive idea: Sitte mentions Aristotle, for whom the highest objective was to offer the citizens security and happiness. In this regard, the author feels entitled to present cases such as the Fora in Pompeii and Rome and the Agora in Athens as typological examples of civic spaces. Here we are to distinguish between two situations. Whereas the complex at the bottom of the Acropolis took shape over several hundred years, the Forum in Pompeii came about, in its main features, in almost one gesture during the second century B.C. Moreover, Sitte is mostly concerned with compositional rules and does not insist on the political and cultural differences between the polis and the empire. Nevertheless, as we have suggested above, these differences have repercussions on the geometry of the space and on the way it is experienced. As the development of the argument proves, the author is reacting to the trivialization of public space, reduced to leftover areas between buildings and traffic lanes. Against the predominantly speculative and technical urban practice of his contemporaries, Sitte opposes a civic set of values as symbolized in the antique architecture of the city square.



As illustrations, he turns to certain small and middle-sized cities of Germany, France, and especially northern Italy. Here he finds the same congruent relationship between public life and spaces as in the polis. As in the case of the former, many of these cities enjoyed economic wealth (based on manufacturing and commerce) coupled with political autonomy. Then followed the advent of local governments, reelected periodically; this, plus the welfare of a large section of the population, eventually led to the transformation of the merchants/craftsmen into citizen burghesses of a sovereign commune. Democratic public life gained in importance and spaces were created to respond to the need for public interaction. Previously, and in northern Italy, the situation started to change during the eleventh to twelfth centuries; the cities were controlled by autocratic landlords. When the cities gained independence and transferred political power to elected councils and consuls, a new building type appeared, the public palace, designed for the activity of the commune. In certain cases, the former landlord was a bishop who also assumed the prerogatives of a laic master, namely ruling the city and making war. The new governments forced the power slowly out of the church's hand, and this is why we often find two distinct urban nuclei, one around the cathedral, the other at the communal palace, each with its adjacent square. The regional differences can be significant in the area, and so varied solutions were given to the equation of power between church and state. But whether they are physically separated as in Parma and Lucca, adjacent as in Pistoia and Bergamo, or together in the same space as in Pienza and Montepulciano, the cathedral

square and the public palace square describe a particular relationship of the two power poles. The architecture the period was intended to be responsive to political behavior: as public life had lost the occult character it had under the rule of the church or the Holy Empire, the new civic spaces were designed for the interaction of a diversified and responsible social body. We can assume that in northern and central Italy there were historic precedents which facilitated the implementation of a social status quo based on dialogue and participation rather than on imposition and exclusion. The geographical and political fragmentation of the area, the incessant chess game of alliances and conflicts between the Holy Empire, the Pope, the landlords, and the communes, might have resulted in a vacuum of authority which favored the continuation of Roman municipal traditions (the area was already romanized in the second century B.C.). After the fall of the Empire in the fifth century, the Goths, and after them the Lombards, assimilated many of the Roman institutions. There is a basis for the supposition that this was particularly true for the building trades, since the Lombards had no architecture of their own. Arthur Kingsley Porter, in a study on Lombard architecture, mentions an expression which casts some light on the identity of the master builders of the seventh century. In a set of laws, the Lombard King Rotari (636-652) names them "magistri comacini." This description is similar to the name of the Isola Comacina, meaning "of Como," which is still used. Porter wrote, "It is known that the Isola Comacina, the only island on the lake of Como, was frequently the last resort of refugees in the time of invasion. By an easy flight of fancy, therefore, it was conjectured that there all the masons from the entire Roman world had taken refuge from the Lombards."¹⁵ It might not have been true for the entire Empire, but it was probably correct for the area that concerns us. Moreover, Porter mentions a second etymology which designates builders by their geographical origin. "In later times the valley of Antelami, in the Apennines, came to be renowned for its carpenters. In the laws of Genoa, the term 'magistri antelami' is the regular form used to



In some of the northern Italian medieval cities, the main facade of building is not necessarily associated with the largest public open space, mainly due to slow construction in time. Also, two or more adjacent institutions could face their own individual open spaces, not unified into a single piazza, but rather independent. Finally, the proportions of squares are important elements. In order to achieve the "urban room" image, the medieval piazza usually has a relatively small footprint. The horizontal dimensions of the interior public spaces served by the piazza are comparable to, or even larger than, those of the piazza itself (especially in the case of churches). The height-to-width ratio is often in favor of the edges versus the width of the square.

Sitte was not concerned with the architectural details of his spaces. His analysis focused on geometry, which he considered the main lesson we can learn from our predecessors. I would add to this that smaller-scale architectural elements have their importance, because they can enhance or contradict a general geometry. The size and color of details (masonry, ornaments, sculp-

ture, pavement) give depth to spaces, stress certain directions, create rhythms, and a feeling of scale.

Another aspect, which is as much an ethical as an architectural one, is the historic generation of these spaces. Different periods, styles, and functions succeeded each other in time, usually building upon the achievements of the previous periods. Without trying to be moralistic, I would call this understanding and respect for the past, this conception of urbanity where the values of the community come ahead of those of a generation or of an individual, admirable.

The classical city contained the prototypical forms of the urban world: the urban block, the street, and the square. Their forms were ordered and concise, and displayed a balanced proportion between repetitive and unique elements, between the private and the public domains. It was this proportion that made cities beautiful, for it revealed a humanistic ideology: man, the "political animal," could attain security and happiness only in cooperation with his fellow citizens, "for even if the good of the community coin-

cides with that of the individual, it is clearly a greater and more perfect thing to achieve and preserve that of a community."¹⁷

Architecture followed politics closely: residential blocks were repetitive and homogeneous, and public spaces, even when monumental and dignified, were shaped to encourage people to interact in free and spontaneous groups. With similar clarity, the free cities of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries and of the early Renaissance displayed their concern with achieving an effective social mixing in their public spaces.

Architects have the knowledge (and the cities of the past are here to prove it) to shape a correct urban environment. We only need to gain, somehow, the credibility and the political leverage that will enable us to implement the "spaces of democracy."

Notes

1 Calvino, Italo *Invisible Cities*.

2 Rapoport, Amos *Human Aspects of Urban Form* Pergamon Press 1977, p. 226.

3 Rossi, Aldo *The Architecture of the City* MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass.) 1982, p. 129.

4 *ibid.*, p. 8.

5 *ibid.*, p. 171

6 Krier, Rob *Urban Space* Rizzoli 1979, p. 19.

7 *ibid.*, p. 17.

8 Aristotle *The Politics*, 1253 a7.

9 *ibid.* 1253 a29.

10 Sitte, Camillo *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* Random House (New York) 1965, p. 103.

11 Plato *Timaeus*, p. 32.

12 Vitruvius *Ten Books of Architecture* Book III, Chapter I.

13 L'Orange, H. P. *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire* Princeton University Press 1965, p. 92.

14 Alberti *Ten Books of Architecture* Book VII, Chapter VI.

15 Porter, Arthur Kingsley *Lombard Architecture* Yale University Press (New Haven) 1917, p. 9.

16 *ibid.*, p. 11.

17 Aristotle *Ethics* 1094 a22.

All drawings by the author.

Transformation, Nostalgia, and Illusion About Public Life and Public Environments

Michael Brill

State University
of New York at Buffalo

This paper is the text of a keynote address given at the eighteenth annual meeting of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), Ottawa, Canada, June 1987. A revised version appears in Public Space and Place, Volume II in a series: Human Behavior and Environment, published by Plenum Publishing Corp., New York.

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My mandate: Several months ago, the EDRA sponsors asked me to talk about *public environments* . . . arising naturally from the conference's sponsorship . . . public sector government. Their letter to me suggested I discuss issues of: all public environments; government's role in provision of environments for public users . . . for multiple users . . . for varied functions; and because of the economic limits of the public sector, how the private sector can be instruments of public policy to provide public environments; and because of EDRA's contributions and perspective, how research relates to all this.

My role: I conceived of my role as that of a Scout . . . sent out by the tribe to look at some territory of interest to them and bring back a report. I really have two reports. One is smooth, where what I found seemed coherent. The second is rough and more disturbing, where simple assumptions come undone and it is hard to make intellectual distinctions hold still. It is much stranger territory than I thought.

The First Scout's Report

Starting out, I examined the mandate. It contains some assumptions, which are: that public environments are a category of environments distinct from private; that government has a special mandate regarding public environments; and that government could have the private sector carry out part of this mandate. These assumptions now seem less true. And, I made some additional and obvious assumptions:

That public environments are those places which affect, somehow, *public life*. And that a satisfying public life is important to us still.

That public life performs several functions: It is a *forum* . . . where the individual's private pursuit of happiness gets constantly balanced by the rules of fairness and reason directed to the common good; and it is *group action* . . . where people come together both to be power, and to symbolize their power; it is a school for *social learning*, where the range of permissible behaviors gets explored; and it is where the Stranger is met on *Common Ground*.

And, given our penchant for interweaving and integration, public life is also about learning of all kinds, about work, markets and commerce, and, very largely, pleasure.

Within this framework of assumptions, I think *Public Environments* can be usefully thought of in a four-fold way:

1. As *places* used for the common good or affecting it; places accessible to and shared by a diversity of people and open to general observation; an arena for a social life apart from friends or family.

2. As being the public's interest that *all* environments protect *people's health, safety, and welfare*, including people of *limited and diverse capabilities*.

3. As how the public is *involved in decisions* about all our environments.

4. As the *delivery of services to the public*, no matter how they're paid for.

Public Life is what this four-fold public environment must support, so I've spent much of my time on this project exploring the relationships between public life and public environments. Thus, my first thinking and set of readings, scholarly, popular, and persuasive, were about public *life* . . . and later about public *places*, ancient and modern, and how we provide them. When I look at the readings, as a set, they tend to embody certain ideas, which are:

The literature of public life is a literature of loss. . . . it contains a widespread acceptance of the idea that there has been a substantial *loss of public life* . . . and while some think it is recent, the idea that we have *already* lost public life is one in good currency over 100 years ago.

There is widespread *mourning* for this public life and much *nostalgia* for it, and many schemes are offered, mostly by architects, to retrieve it.

It is suggested that this loss of public life has already had major, *negative consequences* for our society, and we should guard carefully against further loss if we wish the proper maturation of individuals and the proper functioning of society. Some, but little, evidence is offered that this is actually the case.

This discourse about public life is embedded in the *discourse about cities*, and reflects our

ambivalence toward the city, and its public places. Thus, it tends not to recognize public life elsewhere than in the city, or outside of the cities' normative public places.

There is often a *condescending attitude* . . . that if we Americans want to see how public life and public place is done really well, we must go to Europe's urban centers . . . always, it seems, to the Piazza di San Marco or Milan's Galleria . . . and that, if we do this homework, we might be able to have that kind of public life here. I will call this attitude "Euro-Urbanist." Euro-Urbanists recognize public life as that which happens in the street, square, and park, and tend not to recognize it in other places.

I note that while public life is always considered desirable, it is seldom clearly *described*.

As well, some of these readings suggest a parallel loss of *private life*, and many suggest loss of *neighborhood* life. And there seems to be some *mistaking* the loss of neighborhood life with that of public life, increasing the mourning and nostalgia.

What could these ideas possibly mean? Do we not have public life? What has been lost? It is seldom articulated, and then not clearly. The most pervasive and, frankly, appealing image of public life is the one our Euro-Urbanists tend to offer. But I think *that image is an illusion now, and moreover, was already an illusion a long time ago* . . . and I think that sustaining this illusion prevents us from seeing our real public life more clearly, and this prevents us from using our public resources more wisely.

I suggest this illusion comes from the movies, from popular and romantic fiction, from history and travel books, from trips to Europe, and from photographs in *National Geographic* and coffee-table travel books. We've put together, in a romanticized jumble, a set of images of many forms of public life from different times: a Platonic Ideal of peripatetic discourse on the aesthetics of justice in the Greek stoa . . . combined with movie images of romantically hurly-burly, urban street

scenes set in a timeless "anytime" from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance . . . combined with Parisian Boulevardiers, elegantly and daringly dressed, witty sophisticated cosmopolitans, holding court in cafes . . . combined with Citizen Tom Payne leading a crowd of citizens to correct actions. And, this image of wildly diverse public life comes packaged in a composite and picturesque setting, and, of course, with the filth and squalor removed.

The public life that has supposedly been lost is imagined and longed for as if it were all one thing, when it may well have been several separate strands of a public life, less interconnected than in our popular image of it. In trying to dismantle this composite image of lost public life, I see three separate strands, interwoven in our longing into one dreamt composite.

I'll personify these three strands of public life as the *Citizen of Affairs*, the *Citizen of Commerce and Pleasure*, and the *Familiar Citizen*.

Richard Sennett best models the *Citizen of Affairs* for us in his vision of a public life based on *civility*, the activity which protects people from each other and yet allows them to enjoy each other's company, and makes it possible for people to act together as citizens in the affairs of the city. At civility's base was the right to talk to strangers while not burdening them with the cabinet-of-horrors of your own inner life, all citizens thus protected by the convention of The Mask of Civility.

Civility among citizens helps people to learn to act *impersonally*, to join with other persons in social and political action, *without* the modern compulsion to know them as persons.

Sennett, de Tocqueville, Arendt, Trilling, and Riesman, each and all, trace the several-hundred-year transformation of the public portion of life, with most seeing it as a *decline* (or "fall" or "loss"). Sennett traces the complex transformation, emphasizing a loss of *civility*, in the modern quest for "personality" and an inner life. Because people started to worry that their inner cabinet of horrors would spill out uncontrollably in their inter-

actions with strangers, *silence in public* became the rule, where strangers have no right to speak to each other, where each person has the right to be left alone, a fairly recent right. Thus, public behavior has today become more about observation, passive participation, voyeurism, spectating . . . and knowledge gained in public becomes more visual, a matter of observation, rather than through social intercourse . . . giving us the modern paradox of visibility *and* isolation . . . the Space of Appearance.

But, even with this loss of civility, we are clearly still Citizens of Affairs, and have not lost the power to come together and to act together. For ill or good, we do act . . . in neighborhood associations, PTA's, boards of local institutions, stockholders' meetings, town meetings, common council meetings, protest or support marches and campaigns, in special interest groups, and we routinely challenge public servants, and we often toss the rascals out. But the testing and forming of opinion, and the taking of action does not, as it once often did, rest on civility, nor does it happen primarily in the street or square. It happens in a wide variety of places, which become, for that moment, public environments, and some of these are not "physical" places at all.

The second strand of our image of public life, the *Citizen of Commerce and Pleasure*, remains very vigorous in a nation dedicated, largely, to Consumption as Spectacle. Festival markets, and the more temporary green-markets, are doing well in every city, as are the many new indoor public rooms in major cities, all acting as food fairs and retail markets for recreational shopping, and places to hang out, and, generally, all private enterprise.

The image this public life is based on comes in a bright, romanticized version we like and a darker one we conveniently forget. The bright vision is of the hurly-burly, highly populated street, from one of our period movies, an urban street scene. The scene mixes spectacle, entertainment, eating, drinking, and amorous pleasure . . . with marketing, commerce, and work . . . with

passionate religious and political activity . . . with exchanging news and information . . . and being expressive and aggressive in encounters with strangers . . . Life as Theater.

The scene is wildly diverse, teeming, lusty, exhilarating, where the rich array of information, the demands made on all the senses, the close physical contact, the movement, the frequent and highly personal interchange, make this image of public life irresistibly exciting and adventurous. This image of public life was, of course, only partly true, and then not for everybody. Streets of the more affluent were far less interesting than this image, and the streets of the poor, monstrous. And the middle classes rode through the streets in closed carriages to avoid harassment, before there was a municipal constabulary.

Social critics and writers of those times, showing us the horrible reality of the streets of the poor, make it quite clear that part of public life could not be what we want.

Friedrich Engels, in *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1845*, describing this life in the streets, says his description was "far from black enough to convey a true impression of the filth, ruin, and uninhabitableness, the defiance of all considerations of cleanliness, ventilation, and health. . . ."

Charles Kingsley, writing in *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*, in 1850, is more descriptive: "It was a foul, chilly, foggy Saturday night. From the butchers' and greengrocers' shops, the gas lights flickered and flared, wild and ghastly, over haggard groups of slip-shod dirty women bargaining for scraps of stale meat. . . . Fish shops and fruit stalls lined the edge of the greasy pavement, sending up odors as foul as the language of sellers and buyers. Blood and sewer water crawled from under doors and out of spouts, and reeked down the gutters among offal, animal, and vegetable, in every stage of putrefaction . . . while above, hanging like cliffs over the streets—those narrow, brawling torrents of filth, and poverty, and sin—the houses with their teeming load of life were piled up into the dingy, choking night."

These horrible realities fueled a public health reform and an anti-street movement, which wanted to bring countryside to the masses, and they promoted environments with less crowding, more light and air, and more contact with nature, manifested in this century in a visionary architecture of tall housing towers set in a green and sunny park, often without streets at all. We've built lots of these.

No one was able to protect the street from the anger directed against it. It has had few advocates. And so, there is less public life in our cities' streets. . . . there is activity, but they're used now as conduits for movement more than as places. They do get used as places when *attempts* are made to do so, . . . where local events are planned—parades, block parties, block-long garage sales—but except for our "urban villages," there is less normal use of street-as-place.

The third strand, the *Familiar Citizen*, is not really about a loss of *public* life but about loss of "familiar," local, social life, where people are *not* strangers to each other. It is outside the family life but family life is its model. I suspect that much of what we mourn is not really public life at all, not a life of the city, but this *small-scale neighborhood life*. It has gone because economic principles of organization have largely replaced social ones.

These two act as polar opposites, where a social mode of organization relates and unites people with personal ties and an economic mode of organization separates people and things into distinct commodities. Each social relation is unique, personal, irreplaceable; each commodity is impersonal, impartially selected, and interchangeable with all others, separating us from other people. . . . Alienation. And every time we go to the supermarket, rather than our corner grocer, we reinforce economic principles at the expense of social ones.

Except in the small town, some suburbs, and for our "urban villagers," these social principles of organization have largely given way to *economic* principles of organization, the American business ethic. And so, many have

lost, or never knew, and yet still long for this social life, and may confuse this loss with that of public life.

Further, there are many who feel the loss of, or nostalgia for an actual, traditional *family life*. The facts are that the traditional family is now a statistical oddity, since family structure and family life have undergone massive transformation. Industrial capitalism, along with other forces, altered the family profoundly. . . . Young people leave it earlier; wives and mothers become independent economically; the family is scattered in space, in experiences, and in interests; and as these family-unifying forces are dissipated, its members are more isolated.

The mourning for neighborhood life and for family life must reinforce, and may even be mistaken for, the supposed loss of public life.

In examining these three strands of our image and reality of public life, I'd conclude that:

Some of this public life has, indeed, been lost and we can't get it back, because we've changed, and now can't have it, or don't want it. (We tend not to really don The Mask other than in Corporate Life or the Singles Bar).

Some of this public life has been lost because it was squalid, dangerous, and unhealthy, and its loss is a good thing. (Engels was right about a lot of things.)

Much of this public life has been transformed, yet many mourn it as a loss because they don't recognize it in its new form, or in its new place. And some of it is not place-based. (Are teenagers hanging out in the shopping mall not engaged in public life? Are radio call-in shows discussing AIDS or the Contras not public life?)

Much of this public life is still quite with us, and in forms that any person from Medieval times on would recognize instantly. (Gorging on fried chicken with strangers at a trestle table at a county fair is archetypal public festive gluttony.)

I would argue that public life here and in Europe has gone through a *transformation*, but it is not a decline, and that this has not been recent, but has taken, so far, three hundred years. Of course, there will be continued transformation, with public life and environments of a different character than before.

Dire predictions about the negative psychosocial and cultural consequences of the loss of our public life have been made for generations, yet is there evidence that we are actually worse off now than when public life flourished in say, its eighteenth-century forms? (Dare anyone suggest we might even be better off?)

The public life we have now is richer and more diverse than the Euro-Urbanists see or will acknowledge. But it is not much like the one they want, or our romantic visions of one. . . . that public life was not wholly transplanted here, and that which was, often took uniquely North American forms.

Our European forebears did have a highly interactive and vigorous public life based in the Common Ground of the street and the square, and later, in the park. By the 1600s, public life started to be transformed by powerful and pervasive psychosocial and economic phenomena, and the street, the square, and the park begin to loosen their hold on some of public life.

After the great fires in London and Paris, around 1670, these cities were rebuilt by developers given special incentives and authorities. Houses built for the bourgeoisie around open squares became the preferred layout, and for the first time, developers, some of them royalty, were able to have most public activities strictly forbidden from the new squares.

By the early 1700s, the largest cities in the world were all growing from swift immigration, developing networks of sociability outside of royal control, and becoming cities of strangers. And, by this time, walking in the streets, seeing and being seen by strangers, became a major social activity. The streets

could not always comfortably support this activity, with their wooden sidewalks, often in disrepair, and with the violence which often erupted in the absence of a police force, and so large urban public parks were built for these promenades.

Characteristic behaviors in the parks were observation of strangers passing by, and the fleeting verbal encounter, much different than previous behavior which had been characterized by more sustained discussions, verbal posturing, and political and social interchange in the streets, squares, coffeehouses, and cafes.

By the mid-1800s, the street, losing its attraction for the well-to-do, and always the place of public life for the poor, is seen as an *urban pathology* to be excised . . . by social critics, reformers, and visionaries, and by those who thought to control the peculiar affinity of the poor for revolution.

America's founders and waves of subsequent settlers came, then, from this background, with this sense of a public life already transforming and with changing ideas about public environments.

In this new and endless wilderness, the mode of spatial expression most natural and native to Americans is the singular identity of free and independent equals. When we were rebellious colonies, our architecture was freed from spatial dependence on old-world models. The spatial language of even our dense settlements, early on, is mostly about free-standing buildings, with the "interval" or distance between them as our characteristic motif of urbanism, an interval which resonates with the sacredness of our beliefs in private property and free enterprise.

The interval is manifested today by America's zoning envelopes, seldom used in Europe, which strictly mandate that there be front, rear, and side yards, and fix their sizes, making of most structures objects in space. And while we did make and designate squares and commons for public use, much of the open space in our cities is that which is

left over from the process of building . . . which diffuses any sense that they are outdoor "rooms," to be used.

This physical form is in strong contrast to the older European cities, where public open spaces are defined first and the city fabric built around them. Camillo Sitte describes these older cities as a relatively undifferentiated solid mass with public spaces "carved" out, a set of designed voids connected by streets, providing a rhythmic choreographic sequence, a *continuity of spaces* . . . where the street and square are three-dimensional rooms for public life.

In these European cities, the facades of buildings are obligated both to *enclose* the outdoor public space and to *signify* private space . . . the facade becomes willing *background* for public space, a gesture of civility. (What American architect readily consents to producing a "background" building?) In most of America, facades do *not* enclose public space, but only signify private space, and wrap, to enclose buildings-as-objects situated in relatively unarticulated open space.

Gutman reminds us that most North American interest in the *street* has always been *two-dimensional*, because speculators, bankers, developers, politicians, and engineers conceive of the street primarily in terms of its capacity to stimulate the market in land values by providing access to each and every land parcel through transportation. This grid of streets, within a larger grid of land, is a way of creating a very large number of small holdings, and thus establishing individual identity.

J. B. Jackson continues to point out the peculiar quirk in our national character which causes us to *over-celebrate* individuality, and to minimize the role played by cities, towns, and work communities in the formation of American character, life, and landscape. He says, "We forget that Jamestown and Plymouth came before the pioneer farm or the log cabin in the forest, and that *interdependence* in America came before *Independence*."

With others, Jackson points out that there has always been substantial public life in the churches, fraternal associations, fire companies, and political groups in the small town and suburb, and he even suggests that there is public life on the franchise strip. But our Euro-Urbanists still suggest that it is only the creation of outdoor rooms and indoor streets that would make public life more possible here.

We will probably build very few more Piazzas di San Marco or Rockefeller Centers or Toronto City Hall Squares, the great, outdoor public rooms . . . for their success depends on great local density, and we're experiencing a population redistribution which decreases density in many urban centers. Conversely, in those cities where daytime density remains high, the land is often too precious to be aggregated to form a new grand space. (New York City couldn't use its formidable powers of incentive zoning to aggregate small spaces into one large space.)

We should recognize that, in general, American affluence has spatially *dispersed* and *segmented* both public and private life, reducing the concentration and diversity in any one place at any one time. In addition, the information and communication portion of public life has migrated largely into the private realm, and has become more non-spatial in character.

Our information and communication lives today are substantially augmented by an extraordinary array of *information* available through many media; by swift and interactive electronic *communications*; and by easier access to near or distant places. All these are currently the subjects of explorations to make them more interactive and to use them in new ways, in commercial, political, and social action. And many are not place-based forms of public life.

At the same time, we still have place-based public life in our small towns, some neighborhoods, and in many suburbs, but we may not see it, for it is not in the Euro-Urbanist tradition of a *high-density* public life lived

primarily in the street, the square, and the park.

We've chosen *not* to live at the high densities that support such public life. Comparing U.S. density with that of countries whose public life is vastly admired, the French have *four times* as many people per square mile; the Italians, *eight*; the English, *ten*; and Holland, *fifteen* times as many. And Canada has one tenth the U.S. density.

But wherever and however public life occurs, it still maintains its primary goals: spectacle, entertainment, and pleasure; marketing, commerce, and work; shaping public concepts of governance, religion, and social structure; exchanging information; and learning from face-to-face encounters with strangers. A few examples of new forms of public life, or old forms in non-traditional places, are:

Many successful newspapers publish several editions, each one targeted to a county or community, so in addition to carrying national and state news, they have news announcements *specific to that community*. [Note: Colonial newspapers, often read aloud in public gatherings, didn't carry *local* news because it was *assumed* you got that in the street, square, tavern, and marketplace. Those newspapers focused on Colonial and European events and on trade and shipping.] Thus, these new papers take on a more extensive role in public life.

Print and electronic media, once operating only in the one-way broadcast mode, have become fairly interactive. Examples: "Man-in-the-street" interview sections and letters-to-the-editor columns in newspapers and magazines are real forms of public expression . . . as are radio call-in shows and TV interview and talk shows. All these extend the numbers of people a single individual may reach.

There is the explosive growth of conferences and meetings that both discuss critical issues and are public (and some can accommodate a large public group because of modern long-span structures, like having the Pope at Madison Square Garden). The networks that

are developed around these issues often have public purpose and substantial longevity, like EDRA.

Neighborhood associations; service sororities (Junior League and working women); historic preservation movement, concrete links with past; public commissions, like the Tower Commission on the Iran-Contra issue, actually working in public via TV.

Event-based public life, local, and national . . . July 4th/Liberty extravaganza and multimedia blitz, analysis and interpretation before, during, and after; Live-Aid/Farm-Aid concerts . . . call-in, be there, parties, internationalization of spirit, entertainment as politics.

Theater groups, publicly funded, performing in the park, in the street, in the prisons, in the hospitals, and being more interactive and interpretive.

We have not entirely lost expression in public life as theater; Mardi Gras; strolling the chaos of Venice Beach; people acting out the Rocky Horror Picture Show every Saturday night for ten years; and the elaborate expressive cultures centered on the skateboard, the car, and the motorcycle.

While neither public *nor* private life is guaranteed by the Constitution, a public life of substance should be available to everyone, to their taste, and it should not deny their development of style, nor demand one either. A *capacity* for a public life for most tastes seems already in the structure of most towns and cities. People try to select cities to live in for their quality of life, in which they try to achieve their particular good mix of public and private life.

Amos Rapoport gives this city-selection process useful images in his two "settings for life," . . . one where the *SETTLEMENT acts as the total setting for life*, with the dwelling as part of a whole (as in Latino/Mediterranean towns), and one where the *DWELLING is the total setting for life*, with the settlement acting largely as connective tissue and waste space (as in Los Angeles). These are, of course,

simpler images than the places are themselves. And these don't necessarily correspond to the simplistic *physical* images of the two physical forms of cities . . . the European "solid city" of the past, seen as a mass with its public squares carved out, and the more modern new-world "tower city" which favors buildings over spaces. Only the staunchest advocate of architectural determinism would suggest that a public life can be had in one and not the other. Or the Euro-Urbanists might.

There is still much more to learn about the three enduring archetypal places for public life; the street, the square, and the park. Galen Cranz has done a wonderful social history of the park. We need a parallel understanding of the square, perhaps using as a model Korosec-Serfaty's study of the Main Square at Malmo. Stan Anderson, Tony Vidler, Bob Gutman, and others have done excellent work on the street, and we need that work extended and built upon. Many of our older public places are now becoming candidates for reuse and I worry that our knowledge to remake or make new ones is both insufficient and stale.

We need to understand more about vernacular public places and public landscapes, as J. B. Jackson does, and as Bob Riley has started to do in his survey of vernacular landscapes.

We don't have institutions whose job it is to sensitively and properly look after or work for public life. Popular discussions of public life are needed, as is setting overt goals for all public environments, not just our streets, squares, and parks. These should be public issues . . . as should the socioeconomic and political mechanisms for bringing them into being and using them, for these delivery mechanisms powerfully affect what we get and how we use it.

A few suggestions from a much longer list of EDRA-type forays would be to:

Do more *systematic critiques* of the full range of public places in terms of how they serve public life. This requires a better understanding of the segmentation of public life,

and an expansion of concepts of Common Ground to include those which are temporary or ephemeral.

Work with zoning and legal folks to conceive of mechanisms which could capture the *true economic value of the street* and return it to the street . . . somehow making streets their own tax increment district, giving the street back some of the public power it once had.

Offer EDRA pre-design programming and jurying services to every municipality considering design competitions which include public environments. There are many of these.

Investigate concepts of the *esthetics* of public environments, to confront the current norm of inoffensiveness. We need to explore ideas of what *public biography* might be, as a basis for design of public place (as opposed to what we morally get, which is the designer's *autobiography*; and explore how elite tastes in esthetics might be social oppression, and how those who feel oppressed fight back with what is called ugliness, as in wall-size graffiti, behaviors Jivan Tabibian once called "the politics of ugliness." A better relationship with visionaries and artists could help EDRA in this foray.

Examine your city's *inventory* and system of public places, in an ecological analysis, to suggest portions that need rethinking. Many cities have underused public environments, and no system of them.

It is clear that EDRA has something to offer the social-psychologists of public life, who, strangely, dwell very little on public environments. A real dialogue would be nice.

The idea of public environment must be *re-conceived* to include and thus *legitimize* the full range of places related to public life, as it really is and as it could be, . . . extending our concepts beyond the street, the square, and the park. These must include the strip, the suburb, the water's edge, the boardwalk, communal gardens, the electronic and print networks, portable public place, the indoor and outdoor mall, the skyway, the highway,

the festival market, the parking lot's Sunday life as a flea market, public buildings, public gardens, public landscapes, and public theater. It seems possible to *re-present* our public life to us in ways that continue the transformation, prevent decline, and offer new illusions for our use.

The Second Scout's Report

There is, in parallel, another scout's report about the territory. . . . a report that is not easy intellectual territory to read or to map. Perhaps naively I expected to find reasonably clear categories, and clear distinctions among them. But my expectations about distinctions between categories (such as public realm, versus private realm or business versus government) are not met. . . . they seem not so distinct from each other. Some of the loss of distinction is due to intrusions of one category into another, and some seems a kind of blurring of the lens. . . . I think there is a great deal of nostalgia for situations long gone, and this nostalgia sustains illusions which prevent us from seeing how much of the public life there really is.

These are not merely intellectual problems, for loss of distinctions and sustaining of illusions has real-world consequences. We see actions taken by public bodies which impoverish public life, actions which backfire, where the opposite of what we wanted happens because we're not seeing things clearly, or don't understand them. These consequences continue to let us know just how counter-intuitive the complex system of public environment can be . . . and how careful we must be of simple solutions in complex systems.

Let me offer some examples of what I mean by loss of categorical distinctions, and nostalgia and illusions.

Loss of Categorical Distinctions between Public and Private Realms

The two fundamental forms of social relations are those of public life and private life. They are distinct, traditionally, in that private life is personal, controlled by the dweller, sequestered, a sheltered region of life, one with family and friends. Public life always

combined three characteristics: for a common good or benefit, a common-wealth; open to general observation by strangers; and involving a diversity of people and thus tolerance of diverse interests and behaviors. With public concerns intruding massively into private life, and private interests profoundly altering public life and environment, these distinctions are blurring.

Intrusions of the Public into the Private Realm

Michel Foucault writes about a "detailed technology of intrusions" into the private realm by the public realm. This includes formal and legal intrusions as well as those of custom, which gathers and organizes all kinds of *information* about you, and then *controls* private acts and decisions: what you eat and drink, and the stimulants you use; the noises you may make; how you may keep your lawn; what sex is; how children are to be educated; how many people may live in your house; what pets you may have; what your house is built of and how; its plan, shape, and esthetics; how you take care of it; methods for its protection; and how it may be inherited.

Foucault doesn't, but I use the word "intrusions" in a neutral sense . . . some are beneficial, some not, and sometimes it depends on other factors. In addition, there are other public intrusions into private life, some welcomed and some not, but which were once centered in public life. . . . Information pours into your home through the mails, under your door, through the TV, radio, and telephone . . . and strangers intrude at your door or phone, proselytizing, selling, or seeking aid.

These public intrusions tend to erase the distinctions between private and public. There are other public-into-private intrusions:

Human settlement is seen as a public enterprise, so every holder of private place must build it and run it so as not to interfere with the public good. All *building and zoning codes* do this. These codes are often based on public-health concepts which analyzed the spatial component of disease and wellness.

Public Health has developed ideas about human density, sanitation, light and sunlight, air movement, and air quality. These have become part of public policy, operationalized in codes, and thus reflected in every built environment, public and private.

The concept that *hazards to private individuals have public consequences* has brought public attention and support to the lives of *vulnerable publics* . . . the disabled, children, and the elderly . . . attempting to insure that their rights, especially of access and use, are not denied through place-design which excludes. This concept of hazard reduction, as well, has been used in *life-safety and property-safety ordinances*, strongly guiding the design of private place.

Use of *homes* for purposes other than dwelling, such as day care, is often constrained by public standards for offering of services in a home. Also, there are new issues surrounding "home-based work," where the criterion for appropriateness of the home for work keep changing. The government earlier forbade work at home to prevent exploitation of women and children, and is now under pressure to reverse that stance to permit work at home. We don't know yet how much "gaze" the public will choose to maintain over the homes where home-based work is done.

Loss of Life in the Street

Public health and zoning and code officials and reformers, in the desire to prevent harm to the public, particularly the poor, developed concepts which intruded first into the *location*, and then into the *design* of all structures, including the private realm of the dwelling. Some of these intrusions have unwittingly reduced possibilities for public life. *Zoning by use* segmented the city by function and building type, reduced diversity, and disaggregated community life. Other zoning ordinances welcomed the tower-in-the-green-park concept, which literally abolished the streets, and street life.

The *street*, a traditional locus of public life for the less-well-to-do, and for the cosmopolitan, has been attacked ever since its horrors in English industrial towns were exposed by

Engels and others. Changes were made, generally for the better. But the concept of the street as an *urban pathology* still lingers, and much new, publicly sponsored action further empties the street of public life . . . It is public action impoverishing public life in one area in an attempt to bring it to another. Two examples are the *indoor mall* and the downtown *skyway* system. Both were conceived of as ways to revitalize downtowns without using the street.

The *indoor mall* on city streets is a destination, not a naturally occurring passage. If successful, it impoverishes street life by engulfing the street's normal commercial and service life in a building's interior, thus privatizing public life and robbing the street of it.

The *skyway* system is a set of bridges connecting private buildings one level above the street. It creates, in at least ten major American cities, downtown's competitive response to the suburban mall, "assembling" an urban mall by adding second-level circulation connecting several buildings. Most of these passageways connect private places to each other . . . although the passages are, to varying degree, public places. They create a second-level city, a "bourgeois boutiquesville," abandoning the first-level streets to the automobile and the non-shopping, probably poor pedestrian. It further removes the citizen from the city.

Intrusions of the Private Realm into the Public One

Public environments serving private wealth: Methods have been developed linking the public and private sectors which have as their goal the provision of more public environments with less expenditure of public money. Results have, almost always, reversed the classical relationship of public environments being primary, and they have made many newer public environments subservient to, and appendages to, private ones.

Many spaces intended as public environments are now brought into being through *incentive formulas embedded in zoning laws*. These laws permit the builder a substantial

increase in allowable building floor area if a public indoor or outdoor space is provided. Thus, public environments are created as a by-product of normal development. Many of these spaces are used as antechambers, passages, or forecourts to private developments, enhancing private value. Their size, purpose, location, and design are outcomes of other decisions, ones not necessarily made for the public good. They are creatures of economics rather than civic good. They are an automatic by-product of *any* development which chooses to take advantage of the incentive schemes, and in New York City, after the 1961 zoning law provided these incentives, every development which could take advantage of them, did.

Erosion of civil liberties: Environments made privately for use by the public are now permitted to restrain public use or access. It is a new phenomenon. There has been over a decade's erosion of civil liberties when space, used as public space, is owned privately. Early on, in 1946 and again in 1968, the Supreme Court *extended* free speech to private property *if* the owners of the place were assuming public roles and functions. The court then reasoned that the new indoor shopping malls were the *functional equivalent* of the old downtown business district, and should be treated as public spaces.

The Supreme Court's balance then tilted toward conservatism, and in 1975 these laws were reversed, forbidding free speech in such places. That law has stood when tested, although a few liberal states have used state constitutions to protect free speech on private property used as public space, in shopping malls, corporate office parks, and private university campuses.

Erosion of civil liberties also comes in a more insidious form, delivered through the powerful *visual language of design*.

For example, private developers in large cities have been offered incentives to provide public rooms, often indoor gardens. The publicly approved zoning ordinances permit buildings to go beyond the volume allowable on the

site, on the theory that these enclosed public rooms are "payment" for the light and space denied the neighborhood by the building's increased bulk.

Some of these are truly public spaces, and some are privately owned, built for public use with bonuses and tax incentives. In both, the "spirit" of publicness is an issue. Many of these spaces have designs whose cues tend to deny access to the homeless, those not well dressed, or those behaving differently from others. These strategies include: The simple fact of having doors, as well as obviously lockable ones; the use of ornate private-sector materials; the "social filter" of the presence of armed private guards at the entrances; or expensive shops rimming the public space; elegant furniture. Sometimes the public space is located in ways that limit knowledge that there even is one. New York City, responding to designs which clearly limit access, now legally requires signs placed at entrances and elsewhere, stating it is a "public space." But the signs are often bronze plaques, or incised into the marble walls, becoming part of the forbidding elegance, not easily noticed, further reducing civil liberties.

Loss of Categorical Distinctions between Government and Business

There is a blurring of the distinctions between government and business. While private enterprise has been made a collaborator with public bodies in the provision of public environments, it still has as its objectives the enhancement of private wealth rather than provision of common-wealth. Goals become blurred in these situations. And because the provision of quality public environment is not a very high priority for government, business interests are often more served in these places than is public interest.

And, increasingly, government uses the same "economic calculus" to make decisions as does business . . . cost justification, benefit-cost analysis, return-on-investment, all the paraphernalia of an organization with economic goals. That, quite simply, denies what government is for . . . which as Lincoln said, is to do what the people cannot do at all, or as

well . . . primarily actions in relationship to wrongs or that which requires combined actions. Economic calculus guarantees that injustice will be done, for it does not value all people equally, and further, cannot place a very high value on enhancement of public life. And the government does not even use this economic calculus evenhandedly, invoking it in some situations and not others, acting capriciously, as if a private body. Thus, many distinctions between business and government are questioned.

Loss of Categorical Distinctions between Public Services and Private Ones

I assumed a clear distinction about what public services are, as contrasted with private ones. History shows that to be a false distinction. The only "naturally public" service has been to service the need for gathering. From the "dancing ground" to its successors, the public squares and plazas, we've always provided public open space. (Ancient Spanish law already required one of every 15 leagues of land to be set aside for public use.)

The notion of what services should be provided to the public, and by whom, has from its origin *varied widely*. Some services we now take for granted as being publicly provided are only recently so. Police, fire, education, sanitation, and transportation all started as *private enterprises*, and were given over to public bodies to run when they became *dis-economic*. (New York City's IRT and BMT subway lines were the names of the private companies that were taken over by the Transit Authority; universities started as placeless groups of students who hired master scholars to teach them.) And now it appears that where these services might again be turned to profit, we're seeing them again become privatized (garbage pick-up, fire).

Nostalgia and Illusion

The nostalgia (and sadness) for public life seems often to include nostalgia for something very different . . . *neighborhood* or *community social life* . . . different than public life. I think that mistaking public life for

neighborhood life can create problems, for public life, which today is much about speculating and observation, is with strangers, while neighborhood life is much about verbal interaction. Design for them would be different; thus, mistaking one for the other has consequences.

We have images of a public life that are idealized . . . that perhaps were never really true, and with the several-hundred-year transformation, have become illusions for which we have great nostalgia.

The nostalgia for these idealized and older forms of public life prevents us from seeing the trans-forms or new forms of public life in new or old locations, and not seeing them reduces our capacity to support them.

Private enterprises, often with the support of public funds, now cater brilliantly to this nostalgia, and market illusions of public life, such as in festival markets, which may be fun, but which may be hollow experiences for those who don't like two-dollar chocolate chip cookies, and who, looking around, must wonder, "Is this all it was?" This gives public life a bad name.

And the nostalgia for the Euro-Urbanist public life of the square and plaza has many of us convinced that more of these are what we should build. And the result is zoning incentives and planning concepts which, among other things, littered Manhattan's 6th Avenue with a startling array of underused plazas, piazzas, piazzettas, and piazzettinas.

Segmentation and Loss of Diversity

What much of this categorical blurriness and nostalgia leads to is increased stratification, segmentation, and loss of diversity. As a people we are still quite diverse, but are more and more organized in spatial patterns which involve distances where we are socially segmented, reducing diversity and limiting social learning. Minority groups, which originally had assimilation as their goal, who wanted to be "American," have received much recent public support for their new quest for positive identity based on ethnicity or race. They now often choose to exclude others, to

live together, even when there is choice, furthering segmentation. An excellent example is the tightly knit Italian community in Boston's North End which has used public policy as an expression of their choice *not* to assimilate. Five successive "down-zonings" have finally brought the permissible building envelope to be equal to the current *actual* envelope, reducing development pressure by reducing the value of the land. And no new outsiders.

This is mirrored by the suburban no-growth movement, the youth-excluding communities for the elderly, the Yuppie condos, and the "private, gated communities" advertised in rapidly developing areas, which all exclude by age or class, and often, by race. All are exclusionary actions played out within a framework of public life, further reducing access of people to each other, taking away Common Ground.

I leave you with a vision embodying these problems of loss of distinction, nostalgia, illusion, and how they backfire . . . a vision of an upper-middle-class suburban family, coming back from a tour of Europe, filled with good feeling about the incredible variety and diversity of people in the public places they visited (of course, the Piazza di San Marco), wondering aloud to friends, "Why couldn't we have that here?" . . . And a week later they go out to vote for the new zoning ordinance which increases the minimum lot size in their community, putting a home out of reach of several recently arrived, but not poor, Vietnamese families, and an Italian Dante specialist and her husband, who recently moved here from their house in Venice, a block from the Piazza di San Marco, where they had coffee every morning, talking amiably with the tourists, in fact, once with the family we've just described.



East Elevation



Section L1

M U S E U M O F C O N T E M P O R A R Y A R T L O S A N G E L E S C A L I F O R N I A

Richard R. Knorr

The Building as Village

James W. Shields
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee

As the programs for buildings have steadily increased in both size and complexity throughout the twentieth century, a singular design strategy has emerged in order to solve consistently the problems of human scale encountered in such large projects: the constituent elements of a program are broken down into individual "buildings" and reassembled to form a "village" of human-scale spaces and objects.

Prominent figures of the architecture world as diverse as Leon Krier and Frank Gehry can suddenly be found exhibiting nearly identical planning theories on this issue, while appearing to be polar opposites on virtually all others.

The intention of this paper is to describe the "Building as Village" concept by documenting three prototypical examples:

1. The Town of the Lakes Inn by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
2. A School at St. Quentin-En-Yvelines by Leon Krier
3. The Loyola Law School by Frank Gehry

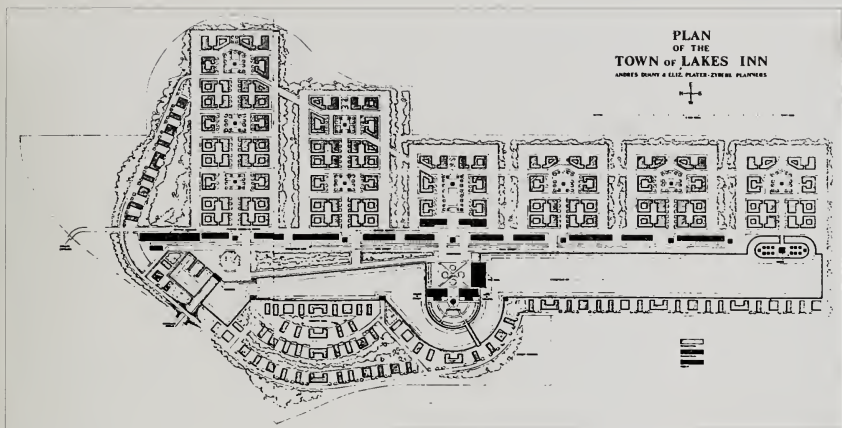
These three projects will demonstrate how the concept has been approached under different circumstances and settings; my discussion will outline some of the important issues, advantages, and problems that have arisen in the design of these "villages."

The paper will conclude by offering the "Building as Village" concept as a fundamental component in place making and the re-

construction of American urban environments.

EXAMPLE #1: Town of the Lakes Inn

In 1985, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk received a commission to design a 3,250-bedroom hotel on a large parcel of unbuilt forest and wetlands near Disney World in Orlando, Florida.¹ Such a commission, similar in program to hundreds of hotels throughout Florida, conjures up images of Lapidus or Portman, of a vast corridor or atrium building dressed in the manner of the day. Even Michael Graves has tried his hand at such a problem, as his "Dolphin" and "Swan" hotels reveal. But Duany and Plater-Zyberk questioned the standard vision of such a project in a fundamental way; they asked why such an enormous program should be manifest as a single structure at all. Instead of developing the brief as a single building set in a field of parking, they took the component parts of the program (guest rooms, restaurants, shops, service, etc.), developed a series of prototypical small buildings, and composed them into the form of a town. Arranged around a series of small public squares, the design takes inspiration from the 1733 plan of Savannah, Georgia, by John Oglethorpe. Utilizing the traditional forms of street, square, and city block, the plan forms concise residential "neighborhoods," as well as a "main street" and a "town square." Duany and Plater-Zyberk acted as both site planners and building architects for the projects, creating the idea of an entire city designed by one architect which is at first disturbing. One is further reminded of Ogle-



Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. *Town of the Lakes Inn*, Orlando Florida, 1985, site plan, plan view.

thorpe's Savannah, however, in that it too was designed all at once, a large number of identical houses having been prefabricated in nearby Charleston and carried by barge to the site under the direction of a single proprietor. One could only hope that The Town of the Lakes Inn, having similar origins, would undergo the same rich processes of growth and change (while maintaining its plan) that Savannah has enjoyed. As at Savannah, one might expect that the many buildings may eventually fall into the hands of individual owners, allowing for further change and individuality.

The Correct Size of Things

Taking information about the size of things from existing cities seems critical to the work of Duany and Plater-Zyberk, suggesting that it is not enough to allow the developer's program to determine the sizes of buildings and spaces. During their research for the planning of Seaside, for example, they compiled a collection of building and street prototypes by studying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century towns of the American southeast. These prototypes, precise in both dimension and form, were then used as the component parts in the design of Seaside.

"This way," Duany says, "there's no possibility of error because the streets and buildings are derived from existing types that we have seen work."² An example would be a street of "Charleston" or "Piazza" houses, derived from existing eighteenth-century streets in historic Charleston, South Carolina. A critical aspect of such a street in both Charleston and Seaside is its extreme tightness and compactness of size, when compared with almost any contemporary development standards. This is hardly surprising when one considers the preindustrial source of the prototype. Critics have questioned Duany and Plater-Zyberk's use of "inappropriate" or "outmoded" models. But the critics, especially those writing in non-architectural journals, have widely praised Seaside for its intimacy, familiarity, and livability, characteristics largely derived from the architects' study and use of historic types.

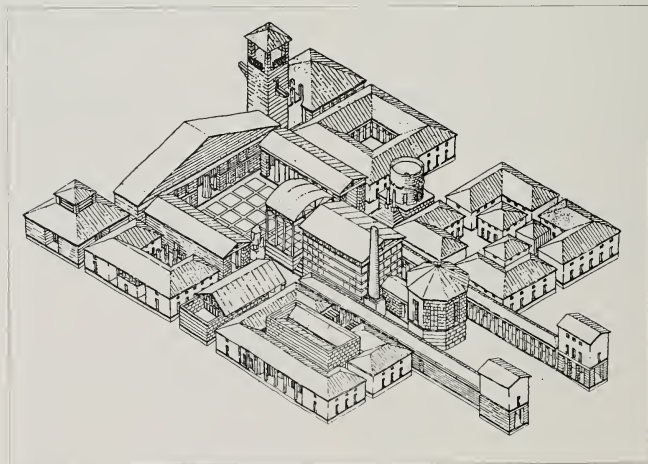
Parking Along the Street

The accommodation of surface parking is perhaps the most difficult problem in all of contemporary planning. The free-standing building surrounded by acres of tarmac is a vision of the American landscape all too familiar to us. The concept of the building as

village, however, offers an alternative. As the scheme of Lakes Inn shows, it is possible to accommodate the majority of the parking requirements along the streets and squares of the town. This simple solution, familiar to people in residential neighborhoods across America, has somehow been overlooked in recent times. Since the parking is dispersed across the site, the visual prominence parking usually has is greatly diminished. This represents an interesting visual phenomenon, in that a street lined with parked cars does not seem like a parking lot. The enclosure of buildings, parallel parking, street trees, sidewalks, walls, and fences all combine to diminish the visual effect of the parking. People never refer to such a place as a "parking lot," even if it is entirely lined with cars. In addition to providing one car per sleeping room, the scheme allows people to park close to the entrance to their building, a necessity of modern life that many planners ignore. The concept of parking along the street can work in other settings as well; Duany calculates that an equivalent town layout could accommodate as many as four cars for the average 1,600-square-foot house.

EXAMPLE #2: School at St. Quentin-En-Yvelines

In 1978, the European theorist Leon Krier undertook the design of a large school to be located in the Paris suburbs near what is now known as Ricardo Bofill's Arcade du Lac.³ The program for this school was a large and complex one, with functions including auditoria, cafeteria, classrooms, library, and a host of supporting spaces. Rather than automatically following the written program, which was suggestive of a single structure, Krier criticized the program itself and determined that the program should be broken down into a series of unique small buildings assembled into a "village". The arrangement of the village is a tight one, with a compressed sequence of streets, alleys, and passageways. This compression is a strong and deliberate intention of Krier's and represents his desire to recreate the dense urban fabrics of preindustrial European cities, a desire which is at the root of all of his work. The relative importance of various buildings is described by their size, shape, and construction, with "public" buildings (library, etc.) being large, monumental stone structures, while "private" functions (classrooms) receive treat-



Leon Krier, School at St. Quentin-En-Yvelines, France, 1978, oblique view.

ment as simple vernacular volumes of stucco. The most important buildings are also located along two central avenues, which combine in a village square, forming a focus to the composition. Vehicular traffic is banned from the village, streets, and squares referring to pedestrian ways.

Human Scale and the Small Building

Krier points out that it is the tendency of modern architects to reduce any program, no matter how large, to a single building. These modern facilities, he suggests, composed with the typical endless corridors required to make them work, have become synonymous with banality and bureaucracy, actually turning the very word "institutional" into a derogatory term. Krier states: "Large buildings are not only difficult to design, they are difficult to build, to maintain, and to control as well as to integrate with the existing social and physical fabric."

To Krier, the strategy of utilizing several small buildings as opposed to a single large one has many advantages. First, a large complex of small buildings can be built over a long period of time without appearing incomplete at any stage. Second, Krier feels small buildings have greater adaptability to change of function than large ones. Third, Krier reasons simply that small structures are more humane and supportive of human activities than vast institutions. Last, he states that small buildings can be technologically simpler than large ones.

Simple Traditional Construction

For Krier, preindustrial craft technologies represent the ultimate achievement in architectural construction. He has consistently proposed that industrialization in the building trades has been the great downfall of architecture. He has, therefore, returned almost exclusively to pre-1800s technologies in his work, supposing that durability, elegance, and dignity come hand in hand with this decision. Many of his buildings are proposed in load-bearing masonry with timber roof-framing. A technology of this sort is ideal for small buildings as opposed to large ones; clearly this technology would be inappropriate for a typical modern office tower, for

example. It can be seen that his attitude toward simple and ancient structures is closely related to the idea of multiple small buildings.

EXAMPLE #3: The Loyola Law School

While the previous two examples can perhaps be described as "historical revivals," the work of Frank Gehry is generally referred to as "deconstructivist." Gehry has risen in recent years to be seen as one of America's preeminent modern designers. While Gehry's avant-garde treatment of form and materials may shock and disgust a classical purist like Krier, on the more abstract levels of site planning and the handling of complex programs, the two architects can be seen to be in close agreement. In Gehry's design for the Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, a complex program (which would almost certainly be handled as a single structure by most architects) is broken apart into four separate buildings and recombined in order to form a sequence of small-scale objects, passageways, and piazzas; in other words, a village. In front of a long and slender office and classroom building, Gehry has placed three small "public monuments," each representing an important public-assembly component of the program. While fragmentary and distorted, each building is an unmistakable reference to a classical prototype: campanile, church with apse, temple with portico, etc.⁴ In describing his design direction, Gehry says, "I tried to build as I always do, creating a metaphor for the city with towers and turrets, odd passages and strange collisions. It grows out of the stuff where I make villages."⁵

Modernist Functional Expression

While Gehry's use of vestigial classical prototypes can at first seem eclectic or historical in nature, another strong connection appears possible, that of the early modern movement's tendency toward the clear formal expression of functional elements. A clear and probably related example is Le Corbusier's *Maison de Refuge* of 1930-31. In the *Refuge* of Paris, a similar strategy of separation is employed, as the vestibule, porter's lodge, and public halls are pulled out as discrete objects and juxtaposed against a



Frank Gehry, *The Loyola Law School, Los Angeles*.

long slender facade of the hostel. Although the objects are in this case never fully detached as they are in Gehry's Loyola, the similarity of visual effect and intention demonstrates that Gehry's work can be seen in part as a reinvestigation of early modern principles. This comparison also reveals, of course, that Le Corbusier was also experimenting with the notion of pulling apart a large program into separate buildings and reassembling them in order to form complex visual juxtapositions resembling those of a dense city or village.

On Place-Making

In Le Corbusier's Refuge the different buildings remained physically attached, while in Gehry's Loyola their separation is total. The significance of the latter is that in Loyola the spaces in between buildings have become designed, useful, beautiful, human-scaled *places*. This is, perhaps, the great singular advantage of the "building as village" idea. At Loyola, space is not treated as the mere residual effect of objects, but instead as a carefully controlled sequence of designed events. Gehry's work doesn't have the left-over nature of most recent American urban space. He creates courtyards, stoas, passageways, a "town square," all places in

which students can sit, meet, debate, eat, entertain, or hold a rally or demonstration. In American cities, architects often find themselves confronted with sites physically isolated from any nearby buildings, making the enclosure of such public spaces extremely difficult. The opportunity exists, however, to make such places within the confines of a single project, by splitting a program into different buildings and arranging them in order to define urbane and useful spaces.

Growth Over Time

In terms of contemporary construction this is quite radical for a single project, and yet it closely resembles the form of the traditional college campus, with many separate structures, built over a long period of time. In fact Loyola was a phased project, the long office/classroom slab having been completed before the start of the other structures. This points to an interesting advantage of the "village" strategy, that of providing for growth over time, as new structures need not compromise preexisting ones in any way. This strategy can greatly simplify such issues as fire exiting, differential settlement, and materials matching, and can eliminate the high percentage of square footage required to link such structures with corridors.

The "Problem" of Going Outside

The disadvantage with much of this design treatment is, of course, that users have to go outside in order to move from building to building. This is a serious problem in the eyes of many building owners, following a time when many cities have built skywalks in order to provide interior links between disparate parts of the city. But while the negative aspects of skywalks on the ground-level life of cities have become clear, many planners have become disillusioned with the idea of the continuously connected structure and have returned to the pleasures and strategies of the traditional city. In Gehry's Loyola, for example, the benign climate of southern California has certainly made the idea of complete separations easily accepted, and as mentioned earlier, college campuses traditionally tend toward this form of organization. It is likely, therefore, that despite a designer's interest in this idea, certain clients in other, less hospitable climates will be difficult to "sell" on such an idea. Yet Gehry, in designing a house in the harsh climate of Minnesota recently, has handled each and every room as a distinct building, although the rooms remain connected by means of heated, enclosed space. Even in harsh climates, several arguments can be made for the "building as village" concept. Construction codes are usually related to the square footage of enclosed space in a single structure, requiring more expensive construction, fire-fighting equipment, and existing accommodations as buildings get larger. Small separate buildings, on the other hand, often can be built using the least expensive construction methods, requiring few "fancy" systems. In the Midwest, good wood-frame buildings can be built in the range of \$50 to \$65 a square foot, while cast-in-place concrete structures can be in the \$75 to \$90 range. The "building as village" concept also tends to eliminate or reduce the space usually devoted to corridors, a portion of construction area which can run as high as 33% in some institutional building types. This reduction in size can offset increased exterior wall surface implicit in the concept.

Conclusion

The vast size and complexity of many modern building types has more often than not led to a banal and "institutional" architecture. Architects have repeatedly heard from their clients: "Please, whatever you do, don't make it institutional." The institutional effect of large structures can be avoided by breaking down the constituent elements of a program into small individual buildings and reassembling them to form a village of human-scale spaces, a design concept which has been shown to transcend mere style. By focusing on the creation of defined outdoor spaces such as streets, squares, or courtyards, the "building as village" concept can become a fundamental component in place-making and the reconstruction of American urban environments.

Notes

- 1 Abrams, Janet "The Form of the American City" *Lotus International* 1986/2 p. 7.
- 2 Giovanni, Joseph "Blueprint for the Future" *Esquire* December 1986, p. 111.
- 3 Porphyrios, Demetri "Leon Krier: Houses, Palaces, Cities" *Architectural Design Profile* 54 7/8 1984, p. 113.
- 4 Fraker, Harrison "Spatial and Material Conventions: Frank Gehry's Artistic References" *Midgarde: Journal of Architectural Theory and Criticism* vol. 1, no. 1, p. 105.
- 5 Dean, Andrea "Deconstructivist Construction" *Architecture* June 1988, p. 66.

On Symbolism of Memories and Ruins

**Wojciech
Lesnikowski**

University of Illinois
at Chicago

*O, ombra del morir, per cui si ferma
ogni miseri, a l'alma al cor nemica -
ultimo delli afflitti et buon rimedio.*

Michelangelo, Sonnet LXXII

On Romantic Gardens

In 1740, twenty-year-old Giovanni Battista Piranesi arrived in Rome as the designer for the Venetian ambassador. Rome and its glorious history became his passion, and after 1743, except for short trips to Pompeii and Herculaneum, he never left the city. In Rome, Piranesi decided to devote himself to the art of engraving. By 1743, he had already published the *Prime Parte d'Architettura e Prospettive*, in which, for the first time, his creative imagination was seen as he indulged in fantastic visual reconstructions of Roman monuments. From then on, he tried to capture the antique spirit of Roman history, approaching it with a visionary mind and eye. He devoted ten years to the creation of his monumental *Antichità Romane*, published in four volumes in 1756. This work, together with *Vedute di Roma* and *Della Magnificenze ed Architettura dei Romani*, presents a romantic glorification, in fantastic visions, of ancient ruins and the distant past. Piranesi created a visionary world filled with nocturnal light, dramatic shadows, breathtaking contrasts, sunken columns, triumphal arches, suffocating spaces, gloomy caves, underground cities, broken aqueducts and cisterns, prisons, immense wheels and galleys, stairs leading nowhere, building ruins cast in gloomy light, immense stonework, overgrown vegetation, decapitated statues,

and sick, abnormal human figures, eaten away by time, all creating a depiction of fallen Roman grandeur.

Although such eighteenth-century meditations were among the first outbursts of modern Romanticism, Piranesi's was not the first instance of romantic worship of the past. The cult of memories and ruins can be traced to ancient times. As an example, one could look at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli as a sort of cultural memory bank—a museum of the Emperor's recollections of his life and travels. The villa complex was conceived as a type of monastery, an ultimate escape into the "better past." Its conglomeration of diverse architectural, spatial, and physical configurations and styles reflected a creative eclecticism used to communicate a sense of nostalgia. There, the aging Emperor lived for a few years, stricken by terminal illness, trailing across the vast rooms of his home, with his ruined body and the "ruins" of his memories. By the Renaissance, this once splendid villa-city was nothing more than a convenient quarry for builders, such as those of Tivoli gardens and the villa of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este. It also became an attraction for souvenir shoppers: popes, cardinals, and common people as well as the aristocracy. Piranesi went there to contemplate the ruins, take measurements, and draw. The precious marble, the figures and stone, all gradually disappeared until only the naked remains of the villa's structure were left.

The particularly intense period of Italian culture, the High Renaissance, was espe-



Egon Etremann: Kaiser Wilhelm Church, Berlin.



Ruins of Hadrian's Villa, Italy.

cially prone to such romantic imaginings and visions. For example, the origins of Orsini's gardens at Bomarzo are surrounded in mystery. No archives or tangible documentation exist. The gardens began with a medieval fortress which dominated a rock-strewn valley. The fortress was turned into a luxurious residence and the valley into a fantastic garden. From the perspective of traditional Italian Renaissance garden design, which featured strictly geometrical patterns, vistas, and circulation systems, the Bomarzo gardens are unique as they do not follow any previously known typology. The creator of this environment, Vincino Orsini, Duke of Bomarzo, must have known the works of the late Mannerists, particularly Giulio Romano's frescoes at the Palazzo del Te in Mantua. It appears that he consciously followed the paths of the fallen giants and gigantic columns from such frescoes, as he turned the bottom of his valley into a world landscaped with monsters and gigantic figures—part human and part animal—which were carved from the existing rocks. A sinister appearance, a sense of mystery, and a

feeling of terror are constant companions of the visitor to these gardens, especially at sunset

Most contemplative pleasure gardens from the Renaissance contained a multitude of architectural ruins, structures, statues, urns, amphorae, grottoes, fountains, and pools. These elements, when brought together in a deliberately exaggerated and bizarre manner in fantastic, dream-like landscapes, left lasting and powerful impressions on the visitor's mind. Such conceptions, which the Bomarzo gardens and Palazzo del Te represent, can be traced to the heart of Renaissance attitudes, where classical learning and scholarship, and knowledge of cultural origins, were united with dynamic creativity. The practice of walking among historic architectural ruins, whether real or newly created imitations, in a heightened atmosphere, was aimed at understanding past cultures. These ruins were considered an important part of the humanist landscape for which Renaissance minds had great longing.

The love of ruins has another, more modern source: the changing artistic taste of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in England. Although philosopher Edmund Burke detested Jean Jacques Rousseau, he was no less romantically inclined. For Burke, the true moral order of the world remained unchanged, and any attempt to alter it would result in ruins. He thought this of the French Revolution, to which he was a distant witness, and he tended to see the old regimes of Europe with romantic eyes—as the true guardians of an abiding morality. Despite his sociopolitical conservatism, Burke contributed to the emergence of the novel, aesthetically anti-Classical, anti-Latin, artistic movement of Romanticism. In his work of 1756, *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, he attacked the broadly prevailing classical taste by pointing out that it was not clarity, distinction, and formality which make things beautiful and sublime, but on the contrary, obscurity, without a logical system and without any bounds. He said that “it is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration and excites our passions.” This sentiment was reinforced by Romantic poets, particularly William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The latter wrote: “It is the nature of thought to be indefinite, while definiteness belongs to reality. The sense of sublimity arises, not from the sight of an outward object, but from the reflection upon it.” For these poets, it was the intuitive imagination of the individual which was the starting point of their quest. Nature would awaken the mind from its “lethargy” by a sensory signal—a desultory breeze, a jasmine scent, or more likely, a roaring torrent or seething chasm. By reflecting upon nature, the mind became “a mansion for all lovely forms,” thereby assimilating its truth and spirit of cosmic unity. Many times it was the child or country peasant, uncultivated by society, who was closer to the profound truths of nature, according to these poets. At times, poems were set in an ancient context, used to transport man from the realm of routine, everyday life. The poet then integrated and reflected in his work the visionary experience from the natural landscape, cre-



Philibert de l'Orme: Ruins of Anet Chateau, France.

ating an art which reconciled man and nature.

This concept was exercised primarily in garden designs, which became the major concern for people like Burke in their attempt to define a new attitude toward the relationship between man's creative ego and that of nature. Unlike Latin gardens, which were originally based upon a rationalized notion of food-producing plots of land, the English gardens reflected the Jewish concept of Eden or paradise—a contemplative, natural garden with beautiful plants and trees. Its sublime charm depended primarily on the dominance of the natural over the artificial, the scorn of man's intellectual creations, and rejection of traditional Hellenistic insistence on regularity, all of which remained at the very heart of French and Italian designed landscapes. The romantic desire of the English during the second half of the eighteenth century brought forth several famous gardens of which Stourhead by Henry Hoare, Stowe by William Kent, and the gardens of Blenheim Palace by Capability Brown are the most famous examples. Although the charm of these gardens depended on the clear dominance of unspoiled nature, or nature arranged to appear unspoiled, there were some specific architectural forms, other than the main house, placed within them to evoke memories of distant events, lands, cultures,

and landmarks once visited or conquered. For instance, at the garden of Stourhead sits the Temple of the Sun at Baalbeck, the Temple of Flora, the Temple of Neptune or the River God, the Pantheon, the Hermitage, and the Nymph of the Grotto. Stowe contained the Temple of Ancient Virtue, the Rotunda, the Temple after Palladio, and a Palladian bridge. Such a romantic archeological architectural collection well communicated the theme of memories and historical ruins designed to stimulate the imagination.

Indeed, during Burke's lifetime, England was undergoing a deep, cultural soul-searching caused by profound changes in its society. While the French Revolution symbolized a new age for mankind, stimulating much thought on man's relationship to his society, England's war with France created other feelings of nationalism and a fear of a similar revolution. The Industrial Revolution added a growing complexity to English life. It was only natural that the English, as a nation of travelers who explored the globe with passion, were nostalgic for the simplicity and beauty of ancient settings that contrasted with their own increasingly complex society. They sought organic unity and synthesis between man and his environment; in such a union, they hoped to create the foundations for their own original cultural expression.

The French at first rebuffed this bias. Even Jean Jacques Rousseau, who philosophically hailed England and in his *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Heloise* criticized formal, rational gardens, was not prepared to endorse the English naturalistic posture. He suggested that only authentic countryside and true wilderness were valid counter-concepts to classical formal garden planning. Although he liked the liberal philosophy of England which deeply influenced its garden designs, he disliked the physical appearance of these designs and would not recommend their use in France. Similarly, Montesquieu and Voltaire, who visited England during 1729-30 and 1726-29 respectively, praised England for its liberal taste, referring again to English philosophy rather than to English artistic achievements. Abbé le Blanc, who

spent some time in England, was the harshest critic of English romantic gardens. In his letters to the gardener to Louis XVI, Buffon, he criticized English garden landscapes for being too naked, vacuous, tiresome, and aesthetically elusive. He attacked the British fondness for ancient ruins amidst their gardens as an expressive act of childish taste. Stowe especially offended him. Yet in theory, he liked the idea of romantic picturesque-ness. Prior to these critics, the famous theoretician Blondel expressed dislike of the English taste for the rustic and for the English zigzag patterns and scattered compositions of ruins, kiosks, tombs, and pavilions. He believed that symmetry and rationality in composition exemplified man's creative genius, and that irregularity was representative of nothing more than mental confusion.

Consequently, the migration of British picturesque, romantic tendencies to France took some time. By 1785, the French finally started to recognize the attributes of English gardens. Curiously enough, the English Picturesque which was introduced to France was not without precedent in French art. The great landscape paintings of Watteau, Poussin, Boucher, or Fragonard already existed. After all, it was the seventeenth-century French painter of romantic landscapes Claude Lorrain who indirectly influenced the creation of the gardens of Stowe. Nevertheless, with English influence, new French gardens gradually acquired a romantic looseness. Yet, due to the natural French tendency toward powerful physical rationalization, the new French romantic gardens were far more geometrically ordered than their English counterparts. Unlike those in England, where one feels an emphasis of the natural over the artificial, French romantic gardens of the eighteenth century were filled to capacity with artificial symbolic events. The famous romantic gardens of the Count of Ermenoville consisted of such sentimental objects as a monument of old loves, a hermitage, a philosopher's pyramid, arcadian fields, a farm, Rousseau's cottage, a temple of modern philosophy, a brasserie, an Italian mill, the tower of Gabriel, and an island of poplars, to mention only the main features.

Compared to Stowe, it was a veritable chain of physical events. The density of these objects in French romantic gardens reflects the French insistence on dominance over nature. Another French garden, the Park of Monceau in Paris, included a similar collection of eclectic "events" from the past: Naumachia, Gothic ruins, a watermill, a Turkish tent, an island of rocks, a minaret, a farm house, a winter garden, ruins of the Temple of Mars, and tombs. At the gardens of Betz exists a house in the form of a ruined column and a half-destroyed medieval castle; in the park of Monperthuis, a partially ruined Egyptian pyramid and a wooden Greek Temple; and at the garden of Versailles, English cottages, a watermill, and vegetable gardens.

The concept of "ruins in the park" did not stop with the eighteenth-century romantic escape from the realities of life and aristocratic flirtations with gentle philosophical concepts of aesthetics. In the middle of the nineteenth century, it was further developed and adapted to the concept of large city parks, such as the great Parisian parks of the Bois de Boulogne or the Butte de Chaumont, and the parks of Mountsouris and Monceau. This tendency went beyond England and France, and flourished with unusual vigor in romantically inclined cultures such as Germany, Poland, and Russia.

On Archeology, Literature, Painting, and Love of Ruins

The love affair with ruins and past recollections repeats itself across the cultural history of mankind. Its emergence corresponds with times when positive, productive activities end in disappointment. The subsequent disenchantment with both present and future creates a remembrance of the past, which appears to be more genial, more glorious, and more profound. In addition, there is the psychological aspect of visualizing the part rather than the whole. Ruins very often appear more exciting to us than the original structure because they allow us to freely indulge in creative imaginings and speculations. The disappointment one feels when seeing theoretical restorations of famous ruins to their original state is very common.

Often, we do not like the Ecole des Beaux Arts' meticulous restorations of ancient Greek and Roman architecture. They look too "real." The preference to indulge in the splendor and insanity of Piranesian visions corresponds to the preference to envision events in our minds as perhaps superior to what they really used to be.

The modern humanist interest in history, ruins, and restorations was accelerated by increasingly popular voyages to distant countries. The name of Howard Carter, who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen in 1922 in the Royal Valley of Egypt, is well known. Equally well known are famous archeologists of the nineteenth century, such as Champollion, Rawlinson, Petrie, Burton, and Schliemann, the latter the discoverer of the ruins of Troy and Mycenae. They stand at the forefront of archeological achievements and of expeditions to Egypt and Greece, to Far Eastern countries such as Burma, Cambodia, India, Ceylon, Persia, and to countries of Africa and South and Central America. The people of the nineteenth century were obsessed with discoveries of ancient ruins, lost civilization, and lost continents. Places like Thebes, Karnak, Troy, and Machu Picchu raised the romantic fever which Howard Carter described when referring to the Royal Valley in Egypt: "the very name is full of romance." Uncovering virgin ruins was a personal challenge, with subsequent access to hidden mysteries. "Can you see anything?" asked Lord Carnarvon while Carter was taking his first look into Tutankhamen's tomb. Carter replied "Yes, wonderful things." While broad and relatively easy travel existed for the first time in history, the distant past excited nineteenth-century minds as these men often preferred to submerge themselves in the past rather than cope with unpleasant realities of their industrial societies.

The Industrial Revolution and the collapse of old morals and customs stimulated the religious and nationalistic fervor of individuals who searched the past for exemplary heroic virtues and elevating examples of pure moralities and great individual creativity. Architects, aroused by works of the great romantic



Cemetery of Montmartre, Paris.

writers and poets such as Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Byron, and Schiller, suddenly looked with keen interest into the thus-far silent world of medieval culture with the hope of discovering lessons in creativity absent in their own century. The ruins of old monasteries and the still-surviving defensive walls and fragments of Gothic cities, as well as ruins of medieval castles of England, France, Spain, and Germany, drew excited attention. Caernarvon Castle, Beaumaris Castle, Windsor Castle, Chateau de Pierrefond, Carcassone, the castles of Spain, the Wartburg and Malbork castles, the Krak of the Knights, Chateau de Beaufort, the abbeys of Cluny, Fontenay, Melrose, and innumerable other medieval sites, whether intact or ruined, attracted pilgrimages and finally the concern of historic preservationists and practicing architects. In those fantastic old ruins—of fortresses, towns, and monasteries often located on precipitous mountains, of ruined cathedrals with wind whistling through broken stained-glass windows, in open graves,

in stones, columns and walls overgrown by vegetation—the romantics searched for inspiration, both philosophically and aesthetically, which would provide their lives with deeper meaning.

Artists and architects of the nineteenth century, inspired by ancient and medieval ruins, attempted to express in their work the spirit of idealism or mystery which they thought characterized such cultures and of which so little was present in their own time. And so Carl Gustav Carus painted the ruins of the incomplete medieval chapel near the German town of the Bacharach. He titled his work *Bacharach on the Rhine*, and showed the ruins of the chapel bathed by the mysterious light of sunset which was so loved by the romantics and so appropriate for picturesque paintings. Caspar David Friedrich painted his *Cross in the Mountains* with a shadowy Gothic cathedral in the background, portrayed in the mysterious light without which melancholy would not really exist. Many

such ruin sites were painted by others, such as French architect Nicolas de Chapuy of the well-known ruins of Saint-Martin-du-Canigüe.

The great Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel early on chose the Gothic style as his preferred romantic imagery. In two of his famous paintings he lovingly captured a spirit very much admired in his times. In the *Gothic Cathedral* of 1813 he showed the form of a cathedral placed against the setting of the "spiritual light" of sunset. The harsh contours of the cathedral dissipate as it appears to take on supernatural qualities of lightness, transparency, and elusiveness. In his other painting of a Gothic cathedral, the building is seen over the trees, barely appearing as a solid material structure. The nostalgia and melancholy of the scene are accentuated by the view of a cemetery located in the front of the building, with its tombs as companions of romantic lovers of history. Viollet-le-Duc painted a few similar scenes. The best known is a rendition of a human figure standing in the midst of flying buttresses of a Gothic cathedral. He also painted dramatic mountain and battle scenes of the medieval era and of the War of 1870 between France and Prussia.

By surrounding themselves with historic memories and images of ruins, the people of the nineteenth century found some escape from the problem-ridden, industrial but still aristocratic century. In these remote scenes, they found the solace and resolution that was absent in their unsolvable, contradictory modern world. William Wordsworth, in Book Six of *The Prelude*, identifies these fantastic and sublime images as symbols of cosmic unity: "in this gloomy strait, . . . The immeasurable height / Of woods decaying, never to be decayed / The stationary blasts of waterfalls / . . . winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn / . . . black drizzling crags . . . the sick sight / . . . Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light— / Were all like workings of one mind, the features / Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree; / Characters of the great Apocalypse, / The types and symbols of Eternity."



German World War I Memorial: Passo Pordoi, Italy.

On Gardens of Death

Of man's created environments, gardens represent the most suitable and ideal place for aesthetic and intellectual reflections and meditations. Their primary function, after all, is to provide aesthetic and sensual pleasure to their users. In architecture, however, which must address functional and structural criteria, it becomes considerably more difficult to render historic ruins and memories. To erect half-ruined temples in the garden or stylistically imitative pavilions and kiosks is one thing; another is to produce cracked and ruined yet functionally sound structures. Yet, history is full of such attempts. For instance, there are Giulio Romano's "cracked" walls of the Palazzo del Te as a playful application of ruins, or Ledoux's combinations of classical forms with "cracked" rustic landscapes such as the Hotel Thelusson in Paris or the entrance gate to his Salt Works at Chaux.

Today's Postmodernism, in its challenge to Modernist didactic purity, strives to return to the playfulness of pluralistic contradictions, and to a complex, psychologically formal language, all of which would never cease to produce individual surprises, discoveries, and interpretations. This is achieved in one way by utilizing historically inspired forms and concepts, thus eliciting memories and fanciful interpretations. Memories and romantic associations, psychologically important for Postmodernists, find their way to present-day design techniques as a series of conceptual assumptions: fragments are more stimulating than wholes, accidents are more amusing than clarity, contradictions are more psychologically fulfilling than over-



The Verdun battle memorial, France.

all harmonious unity, collages are more colorful than a single stylistic orientation, historical references and adaptations are more enriching than modern, detached purity, irregularities are more conceptually challenging than regularities, informality is more human and desirable than monumentality, stylistic mannerism is more creative than comprehensive rationality, the historical ruin is more interesting than a well-preserved structure. Thus, a broken pediment is looked upon with admiration while a solid one is viewed as unfortunately banal; a skewed spatial sequence is more fun and eventful than a straight one; ornate surfaces are artistically richer than stripped ones; and picturesque compositions are viewed as aesthetically more pleasing than refined, ordered arrangements. Obscurity turns out to be creative, while comprehension is dull. Burke won over Descartes, Romano's mannerism becomes more worthy than the straightforward, rational power of Brunelleschi and Bramante, Vaudemeyer is more complex than Labrousse, or Ruskin's romanticism is more appealing than Choisy's constructivist theories. As a result of such taste, Postmodernism has often been criticized as responsible for the avalanche of kitsch in recent architecture. Consequently, because

of its failures, the entire territory of memories and ruins could be considered as no longer valid in this not very sentimental, technological epoch of ours. There remains, however, one area of architecture within which memories and ruins have always played an extremely important and genuine conceptual role: cemeteries, war memorials, or historical monuments.

As distinct from "life gardens" discussed above, these cemeteries, memorials, and monuments constitute gardens of death. The tradition of building commemorative monuments to famous state, military, or artistic personalities goes back to antiquity. We remember Trajan's column or the Constantine Triumphal Arch in Rome. Throughout the Roman Empire, as well as ancient Greece or Egypt, thousands of similar commemorative structures were erected. The cult of death was as strong as the cult of life achievements. During the Renaissance, this tradition reached its peak under Louis XIV of France. In the nineteenth century, particularly prone to the cult of heroes, this tradition produced vast numbers of commemorative structures, from Napoleon I triumphal arches in Paris to the funeral monument of Louis XVI and his slain Swiss guards, as well

as monuments to Garibaldi, Gnaisenau, Wellington, and hundreds of distinguished military, political, artistic, and scientific figures. The tremendous interest during the nineteenth century in archeology, historicism, and creative genius could be seen in the cities of Europe which decorated themselves with the statues of great heroes and achievers of the past.

It was not until the twentieth century, when wars caused such tremendous physical destruction, that architects and artists found the task of capturing the modern spirit of disasters and tragedies exceptionally challenging and symbolically powerful. The consequences of war always had a powerful hold on people's imaginations. Huge military cemeteries of World War I, such as the one of Verdun, exemplify the long succession of modern ruin-inspired memorials or modern "gardens of death." The famous "Tranche des Bayonettes" at Verdun, a concrete structure built over the rows of French soldiers who were buried alive by tons of debris, their outstretched bayonets reaching above the surface of the ground, showed with dramatic power the spirit of horror and destruction captured in the most expressionistic way.

The Italian World War I monument at Mont Grappa was erected at 1,775 meters altitude and contains 25,000 bodies of Italian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers who died during the epic struggle between both armies. It is another emotional gesture to the enormity of human sacrifice. Besides the powerful series of steps within which soldiers are buried, this monument also contains strategic defensive caves with rusting guns, trenches, crumbling supply roads, and other military memorabilia. Not very far from there, at the famous Alpine Pass del Pordoi, a German military monument was erected in the shape of the truncated cone, placed on top of a circular, stony terrace where the tombs of soldiers are located. The romantic idea of soldiers' tombs opened to the sky, rain, and snow is realized here and repeated later in Hitler's Putsch Memorials in Munich.

In Italy, on the rocky countryside between

Gorizia and Monfalcone, rises another incredible memorial to the Italian World War I dead. Here, 100,000 "Unvanquished" who died in various battles in Gorizia are remembered. They lie in a series of platforms stepped up the hill which overlooks the battlefields. In this perhaps finest of all Italian war necropolises, the magnitude of war was realized in keeping with the typically Italian emotional phantasmagoria which historical Italian cemeteries reveal.

Near Rome, off the Via Appia Antica, there is a monument to the 335 Italians murdered by the Germans in reprisal for their killing 32 German soldiers. The basic idea of this design was to leave the scene of the murders intact, a similar concept of the French "Tranche des Bayonettes." The cave where the murders occurred is left untouched but overgrown with invading vegetation in true Piranesian manner, while tombs of the victims were placed in another cave covered with the enormous slab of the roof. Darkness and occasional dramatic light, invading vegetation, and rough materials are instrumental in capturing the tragic memories.

Further to the south is a great Polish war memorial placed on the top of Montecassino, facing the old monastery of St. Benedict. Its burial terraces, simplicity, and dramatic siting are comparable to the Italian monuments of Mont Grappa and Gorizia.

Spain has its fascist memorial in the Valley of the Dead west of Madrid, built on the orders of General Franco. It is the memorial basilica, where an enormous cave is carved out of the mountain and consecrated to the fallen soldiers of the Spanish Civil War.

In Hitler's Germany—and no other culture seemed to love historical memories and ruins more—the romantic cult of memorial buildings was very carefully maintained. Hitler's architectonic preoccupations with these themes was no less passionate. For instance, coffins of Hitler's fallen comrades were placed inside of twin roofless temples on the Royal Plaza in Munich—exposed to sunshine, rain, and snow as to remain among the living in the

best romantic tradition. The great commemorative Tannenberg battle memorial in East Prussia, called the funeral castle of the Marshal Hindenburg, was erected at the same time. Later, architect Wilhelm Kreis was asked to design a series of German army memorials to be erected in different conquered countries of the world to help remember German accomplishments. In addition, as described by Albert Speer, Hitler's chief architect, the theory of architectural ruins was created by Hitler with the goal of assuring that ruins of main monumental structures of the Third Reich would survive for a thousand years. Speer even produced imaginative drawings of the future images of these ruins. Today, not even after a thousand years, but barely four decades after the final collapse of the Third Reich, we can visit some of the unintended Hitlerian ruins such as the Colossus Stadium in Nuremberg.

The memorials to the horrors of World War II ensued. All across Europe, military monuments and cemeteries followed this direction of incorporating surviving remains of the wars into architectural compositions. Parts of tanks, fallen airplanes, guns, helmets, and shells of all sorts became commonly used objects along with the ruins of surviving structures. The Pearl Harbor Memorial floats over the hull of the sunken battleship *Arizona*. The Japanese preserved portions of the destroyed city of Hiroshima as the ultimate memorial to the first nuclear holocaust. The Germans in Berlin, under architect Egon Eierman, incorporated a surviving tower of the bombed-out Kaiser Wilhelm Church into a new, modern church structure. In Berlin, Schinkel's guardhouse was rebuilt and readapted as a memorial to the anti-Nazi fighters.

In Eastern Europe, in regard to the apocalyptic consequences of the last war, vast numbers of commemorative structures from the military to the civil conflicts were erected. In Warsaw, the tomb of the unknown soldier was placed within the remaining half-ruined arcade of the destroyed royal palace. The Warsaw insurrection memorial, Ghetto memorial, or Westerplatte memorial were

built to commemorate tragic military struggles. In the Soviet Union, the Stalingrad memorial, with its gigantic hand carrying the torch of the eternal flame, reflects similar remembrances of the war effort. And then came the memorials of the holocaust at Auschwitz or Majdanek as well, in hundreds of similar places of human annihilation. The Auschwitz memorial incorporates the remains of the railroad tracks which once served to transport millions of victims to the furnaces and leaves intact row upon row of half-destroyed prisoners' barracks to generate a feeling of desolation, loneliness, and ultimate horror. The Majdanek concentration camp memorial contains a mountain of human ashes placed under a low, concrete dome.

At those places of man's ultimate evil, the concept of past remembrances and historical ruins achieve the most dramatic level of meaning. The gardens of Eden and sublime poetic memories were replaced by gardens of death and oblivion, and the sublime ruins of the glorious historical past were replaced by tragic ruins of the horror of man's modern existence. Orsini, the creator of Bomarzo, was outdone. It is, however, at Scarpa's Brioni cemetery at St. Vito where Piranesi's world of ruins and destructive vegetation, English moody picturesqueness, and the Italian sense of form and sculpture come together in an organic, gentle union. Here, the imagination of the poet creates a garden of memories and ruins filled with sad yet wonderful reflections on the temporal nature of worldly existence. The gardens of life and gardens of death are brought together in a gesture of reconciliation.

Summary

The architecture of ruins and historical memories, begun with Piranesi's ancient visions, has not diminished in importance over time. The twentieth century has produced clear evidence of the cultural need for this type of creativity, particularly when the consequences of events affecting our society so deeply should not be forgotten. Piranesi's dramatic longing for the old glories of Italian culture in the face of a weak and divided

nation, Britain's desire to establish its own original form of architecture and landscape, the nineteenth-century love of the remote and historically fantastic, and the twentieth-century need to remember history are all founded upon the creative, poetic desire to go beyond rational frameworks of our existence. Poetics, romanticism, and irrationality are key terms in understanding such realms. Ruins, tombs, monuments, dreams, fantastic poetic associations, and irrational fantasies may not produce anything immediately useful or constructive. But, that final cultural usefulness in architecture cannot be calculated only in terms of functional, economic, and structural efficiency. The true architectural contribution to historical culture is also related to the realms of fancy, even if its origins may be eclectic and it may look to the past for inspiration. Furthermore, it is obvious that such a contribution should not be judged on the grounds of systematic, intellectual, and rational qualities, but instead, on the grounds of intuition and instinct, faculties which cannot be defined with conceptual rigor and precision. It is romantic in inspiration, an expression of the longing for a mystical rapport with the universe and its history, an expression of a desire to acquire a deep and natural knowledge of the universe by surrounding oneself with the sensations and passions of the irrational kind. Intuition, which is not based on an ability to justify itself, is capable of an instinctive, immediate apprehension of certain aspects of the truth prior to intellectual definition. Intuition gives us that arbitrary "taste," that instinctive like or dislike of something. The romantic longing for historical worlds and remembrances of past times is based upon such intuition, without which our world would be only half as rich.

Monuments in the Realm of Memory

**Farouk Seif and
Folke Nyberg**

University of Washington

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to trace the spectrum of monuments in the realm of memory. It discusses in some detail the philosophical foundations and psychological aspects of monuments and their role in the human psyche. It is necessary to inquire as to the nature of what constitutes not only the basis for a cultural psyche, but the ability to convey this understanding through a physical representation. This physical representation of past events, experiences, and natural phenomena as monuments fundamentally plays a significant role in furthering and edifying cultural memory and common ethos.

The Concept of Memory and the Perception of Monuments

Through investigating the nature of monuments, one must shed some light on the concept of memory and its essential function in human life. Thus, an understanding of the role of memory in recalling or remembering events and places emerges.

While memory is *what* we remember, remembering is fundamentally *how* we remember. Remembering basically is one way of knowing things in the past, present, and future (Smith, 1966). Monuments evoke memories, and memories are triggered by the act of remembering and recalling. But, memory is more than an act or process of remembering or recalling to mind experiences or facts. Memory is a collection of mental pictures and images of the past; it "belongs to the same part of the soul as the imagination . . ." (Yates,

1966, p. 33). From this concept of memory one is easily persuaded that memory is the most significant human characteristic, and it certainly signifies and influences the idea of monuments.

Needless to say, physical objects of representation as monuments trigger memory through the sense of perception. Repeatedly, however, memories can be triggered without any perception of physical objects such as monuments; as Thomas Moore would say:

Long, long be my heart with such memories
fill'd!

Like the vase in which roses have once been
distill'd:

You may break, you may shatter the vase if
you will,

But the scent of the roses will hang round it
still.

(Farewell! but Whenever . . .)

Although the fragrance of Moore's roses (memories) remains for a long time, our thesis is bounded by monuments as memory objects or as memories' containers (Moore's vase). While memories seem to emerge and pass through the mind of their own accord (Smith, 1966), the relationship between memories and perception of matter is generally uncertain. But, in the case of monuments, the relationship between memory and perception is very pronounced. Through perception of the present, monuments evoke memory of the past. Monuments as memory

objects, therefore, influence our perceptions, and our perceptions in turn cause a recalling of past events and experiences. Perception then is an immediate path to here and now or a linkage to our memory of the past. Both a sense of perception and memory are needed for our knowledge of both the present and the past. Here, for instance, it is worth noting the downfall of postmodernism. While so much is given to perception, very little is allowed for memory. Under the excessive use of suggested metaphor in postmodern architecture, memory has been overshadowed if not replaced by a shallow perception.

However, monuments cannot evoke memory of the past without the sense of perception. While the sense of perception provides us with knowledge of the present, the memory evoked by monuments provides us with knowledge of the past. Kevin Lynch (1960) identifies landmarks along with paths, edges, districts, and nodes as elements of the city image for visual recognition and orientation. These elements of the city image, through perception, help the observer to remember and to recognize the physical environment around him or her. It is obvious in these elements that memory is closely akin to perception. However, these physical forms, unlike monuments, are not a product of memory. Then, landmarks through remembering and common usage mark places so as to direct and orient individuals, while monuments are physical objects, or matter, or acts purposefully intended to evoke conscious and emotional response. The pluralistic society appears to be using landmarks for orientational purposes through a familiarization based on perception. Monuments, on the other hand, so represent virtues that direct individuals to a common ethos. In fact, the act of creating monuments affirms the importance of embodying and renewing memory.

Monuments as a Matter of Memory

A considerable degree of confusion among laypeople, and most architects and designers, exists in the interpretation and justification of what constitutes monuments. Perhaps, generally speaking, monuments can be classified as memory objects along with his-

torical artifacts, landmarks, large-scale objects, and what we call living tradition objects. Living tradition objects evoke what may be called constant-habitual memories, sometimes reinforced by ritual. But, at any rate, these living tradition objects are not true monuments because they simply are not products of memory. Living tradition objects, therefore, can be called social monuments.

Monuments, whether named or built consciously or unconsciously, have persistently been maintained and qualified as products of memory throughout human history. Since prehistoric time, structures like Stonehenge have been considered as a megalithic sacred monument evoking memory of heavenly and astronomical events. Egyptian temples, tombs, and obelisks, monuments which were purposefully erected to last eternally, also evoke memory of mythical and religious events as well as a cult of natural phenomena. "The idea is not without foundation when we realize that the avowed purpose of the pyramids (for example) was not only to preserve the mummy of the pharaoh for the return of the soul in the infinite hereafter, but also to be the center of the cult of the royal dead, and, by consequence, the dominant element of the vast monumental complex" (Fletcher, 1961, p. 23). We must recognize, however, that Fletcher's notion of "monumental complex" includes the quality of being monuments not only through persuasion, but based on deeply held belief and pathos.

Also, as elaborate Greek monuments were built to commemorate athletic and musical festivals, Roman triumphal arches and columns of victory were erected to record triumphs of victorious events. Although, undoubtedly, these historical artifacts were products of memory in the past civilizations, they are still monuments. They evoke historical memory, a memory associated with the past through usage of persuasion. Although these historical monuments have an historical presence, they have, through time, lost original ritualistic function.

Ironically, over time, monuments have been trivialized, misused, and abused. Even so-

called mark-locational survey points, whether they are natural or artificial structures, are interpreted as monuments. Although "bench marks" as relatively permanent objects are helpful in marking and remembering loci, they are undoubtedly not products of memory. Also, landmarks and large scale objects which are primarily points of reference for orientation in spatial location (Lynch, 1960) have been mistakenly justified and frequently glorified as monuments.

Furthermore, monuments, unlike landmarks, do not simply involve singularity or uniqueness in their visual context and physical characteristics. Singularity and uniqueness perhaps can be desirable qualities in monuments, but they are not essential attributes. Landmarks, more often, may be transformed into monuments, not because of their visual characteristics, but rather because of what Kevin Lynch calls "historical associations, or other meaning" as powerful reinforcements. "Once a history, a sign, or a meaning attaches to an object, its value as a landmark rises" (Lynch, 1966, p. 81). Nevertheless, if the reinforcement is culturally significant and historically memorialized, then physical objects may evolve from being landmarks to becoming monuments. But, the deliberate act of designing monuments is distinct from the designation of landmarks, based on common usage and orientation. Therefore, monuments are products or matter of memory, furthering a public discourse through virtue.

Monuments: Persuasion and Virtue

Cicero noted, "Persons desiring this faculty [of memory] must select places and form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things" (*De Oratore*). In Cicero's discussion of rhetoric, he includes a brief description of the mnemonic function of places and images. As Frances Yates (1966) describes it, the most common mnemonic place system used was the architectural type. She considers the clearest description of the process as that of Quintilian. He suggests that in order to form a series of

places in memory, a building is to be remembered. The more spacious and varied the better; this applies to the forecourt, the living room, bedroom, and parlors, not omitting statues and other ornaments with which the rooms are decorated.

It is undoubtedly this relationship between rhetoric and memory as a system of formal manipulation to convey a special effect that is the theoretical underpinning of Alberti's writings on architecture and the uses of the monument (1955). Not only do we recognize Cicero's emphasis on civic virtues in Alberti's treatise on architecture, but also the rhetorical notion that "the house is a small city and that the city is a large house." The role of the monument to persuade the citizen of civic virtues falls then to the art of persuasion exercised by the architect. With the city as a memory theater much like the role of the house as described by Quintilian, the monument serves an edifying role. It becomes essential in the structuring of the remembrance of a past which is no longer intertwined with custom and tradition in the medieval sense, but becomes an autonomous discipline. The professionalization of building activity and the deliberate planning of the city as a place of monuments marks the shift in meaning of the concept of monument from having a memorial value to having an edifying and rhetorical purpose.

In a discussion of Alberti's use of the monument, Françoise Choay (1984) observes that there is a new approach to the concept of monument by classifying various kinds of "monuments erected for preserving the memory of great events." This produces a hierarchical nomenclature which is later used to provide a new mode of architectural memorialization. As Choay notes, "The erection of edifices is the paradigm of human creativity and of that divine power of invention innate in human beings." This autonomous role of architecture as the history of monuments not only places the architect in the central role of the creator of monuments, but also gives legitimacy to the notion that both private and public buildings can become monuments because they are a great

inducement and argument to us for believing many things related by historians. This rational and humanistic use of history in having monuments serve as an educational role anticipates not only the polemical role that monuments will serve in the use of evoking history, but also in making the architect the narrator. This capability of the architect not only as an interpreter of history but also as a manipulator of public discourse becomes problematic in relation to a public that is not based on common conventions but on an architectural autonomy that celebrates architecture itself rather than furthering a public discourse.

The shift to subjective uses of the monument eventually results in trivialization and confusion of the monument's original role in marking a place of common significance, to serve as the *topoi*, or topic for the public discourse in the polis. Architecture as a rhetoric without a legitimately developed topology lends itself to arbitrary decisions of what constitutes significance. This shift from the topological to an individualistic determination of what constitutes meaning denies a society an opportunity for a structured discourse that furthers the polis or the public realm, as Hannah Arendt would have it.

The civic use of monuments for religious purposes was adopted by Pope Sixtus VI in his effort to reconstitute the universal church after the Reformation (Moholy-Nagy, 1968). His decision to connect the seven most famous pilgrimage churches by connecting avenues was based on his desire to ritualize the piety and penitence in a Rome that was worldly and disenchanted by the limitations placed on them by the Counter-Reformation. This adaptation of Roman and Renaissance rhetorical uses of the monument, of course, anticipates the Baroque efforts to legitimize the absolutist power of the king as a divine ruler, but also furthers the arbitrary power of the architect to construct an autonomous experience such as Versailles. This separation of the architect's power of persuasion from the ordinary life of the people is yet another indication of the problematical role that the architect eventually plays in the city.

As exemplified by Edmund Bacon's (1967) admiration of the planning for Rome by Pope Sixtus VI, the civic designer is presented as the regeneration of cities through the superior position of an order that is based on an authority that is not necessarily legitimized or understood by those affected by the planning. It is not surprising that urban renewal work in the United States proceeded on the basis of an autonomous formalism that was viewed to have intrinsic merit in its ability to produce a physical civic order. This order, as in the case of Baron Haussmann's planning for Paris, was of dubious legitimacy in serving the public good and increases the confusion about what constitutes monumentality.

The notion of monumentality as "*grandeur*," while indicative of the final stages of the French monarchy, is also shared by the notion of the sublime as evoked by the Enlightenment as a basis for the architectural monument. Boullée and Ledoux, while also reflecting the Newtonian universe in their intent to represent the harmony of the spheres in their utopian projects, saw sheer size exaggerated by a volumetric purity as the replacement for religious persuasion. The monument proposed for Newton is then a combination of these intentions to seek a harmony between scientific progress and human enlightenment. No longer embodying memory in places of public and religious significance, the neoclassical view of monuments became increasingly formalistic and subservient to those who sought legitimacy by using the monumental to evoke and sustain awe by the size and placement of objects in the city. In addition, fragmented and disconnected uses of history were made possible by an historicism that preferred compositional techniques in the design of the monument to the earlier typological uses of the monument in Renaissance theory.

It was under these circumstances of subjective and arbitrary uses of historical references in the design of monuments that John Ruskin insisted on the monument's role in transmitting the narrative of past generations; he also noted that "no building could be really admirable which was not admirable to

the poor" (Ruskin, 1974, p. 35). While Ruskin's theory of the monument can be construed to be similar to the associational and semi-logical use of the monument by the so-called postmodernism, there is a distinct difference in his distrust of "the glistening and softly spoken lie." This truthfulness in the monument that Ruskin insisted on can only be brought about by a search for a common agreement about the legitimacy of the topic of the monument. It is this rhetorical questioning that is served by Claes Oldenburg's series of monuments. While ironical in his juxtaposition of common objects with unexpected contexts, Oldenburg not only evokes but provokes public discourse. Oldenburg's works are entirely modern in using the sublime to make the familiar monumental, but they also represent a search for common memories that are mass-produced and ever present. On the one hand Oldenburg succeeds in his ironical reflection of what monuments can mean in the age of media, yet the memorializing of cultural memories no longer seems possible to the architect and the artist. His uses of the monument acknowledge the displacement of the monument by the landmark and indicate the replacement of ritualized topology by quotidian objects representing the trivialization of everyday life.

Efforts to the contrary, as exemplified by the work of Terragni, not only represent the attempted recovery of the necessary institutions that can provide a cultural memory but also the role of the monument necessary for a recovery of culture. The rhetorical dimension of Terragni's work is evident in his *Casa del Fascio* where the grid plan of the town is tilted into the facade, providing a redefinition of the relationship of the building as a monument to the city at large, and thus echoing Alberti's rhetorical uses of the building as a monument in the generation of civic virtues (Forster, 1984). If it is the role of monuments to memorialize virtues, it becomes increasingly clear that architects cannot presume to represent them in the public realm before we recover the polis. This essentially political activity cannot be usurped by semblances of the monument or the misuses of monumen-

talities. While architects should make a distinction between politics and architecture, we cannot abnegate the essentially political nature of architecture in providing the setting for a public discourse. The monument necessarily connects not only the past to the present, but also seeks to move the individual from a cultural narcissism to become an active participant in the polis.

Conclusion

This inquiry into the interrelationship between monuments and memory may present a richer and higher intellectual understanding of what qualifies as a monument. We hope that confusion about what constitutes a true monument is eliminated. By excluding landmarks, historical artifacts, and living tradition objects, an understanding of monuments becomes clearer. The rhetorical uses of the monument in the classical sense (Corbett, 1965) will provide the structure which will establish a topos or locus where cultural memories are shared through a renewal which might be best described as ritualistic. The ritual establishes the authority of the monument and also affirms the common understanding of its origins. The role of the architect as the narrator changes to that of choreographer where the necessity of participation acknowledges the polis. By furthering the possibility of participation, an active political discourse will seek to reveal the nature of the logos. Through persuasive representational form, this agreement developed in this search for a common logos will serve to orient and direct the individual to the cultural memories vested in the monument.

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Et in Arcadia Ego:

The Place of Memorials in Contemporary America

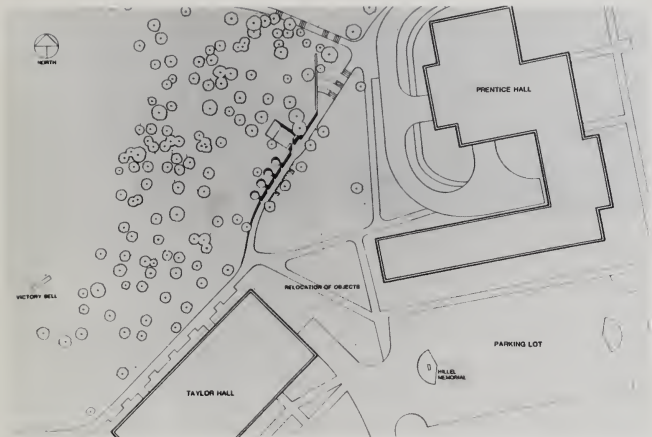
Wayne M. Charney
Kansas State University

The unpopular war in Vietnam opened deep rifts in American society in the 1960s and early 1970s. Those who held opposing viewpoints clashed, often violently, finding little common ground on which to agree. In rebuilding a more peaceful and tolerant public life, American society in the 1980s, healed but scarred, has acquiesced to the architectural imperative for communal places that reflect upon that earlier period of disruption and dissent. The healing has, quite naturally, produced memorials which revive a spirit of community or which concretize shared experiences. However, the scarring has necessarily but somewhat startlingly resulted in memorials which, in their darkly ambiguous forms, stand in dramatic contrast to those more heroic and clearly comprehended memorials of previous eras.

This paper will explore the meaning and the place in America's public life of two recent memorials: the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., designed by Maya Lin in 1981, and Ian Taberner's 1986 winning competition entry for a May 4 Memorial on the main campus of Kent State University in Ohio. In their understated forms and nonpolitical messages, both memorials have been lavishly praised as most appropriate expressions of commemoration in light of the disturbingly divisive and interrelated series of tragic events in our recent past which these two memorials, both separately and together, attempt to objectify.¹ However, both memorial designs also have been harshly criticized because of those very same

understated and morbidly death-oriented formal characteristics found in each. Indeed, the lack of traditional heroic formal devices in each memorial has led to the commonly held perception that they both represent a new, unconventional, and perhaps regrettable approach to commemorating American history. No other war, critics say, has been commemorated with such gloomy depressions in the earth.² Furthermore, the cloning of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial into a growing family of state and regional progeny has reinforced the perception that a new sort of formal commemorative device has just recently been created.³ The present-day attitude of some is to bemoan this unfortunate tendency to scar the earth with a black gash and then to call it a memorial. The first such black memorial may have been innovative, some argue, but the trend to create many more in its image is a dispiriting fad.

The purportedly mute, blank, and despairing minimalism of each of these recent memorials does represent a marked departure from the Jeffersonian hierarchies of stoic olympian figures seated among articulated gleaming colonnades that rest, in turn on white crystalline pedestals surrounded by regularized bits of nature. To presume, however, that more recent chthonic memorials stem from no relevant or extant design tradition is to ignore the historical validity and appropriateness of long-established, alternate commemorative formal devices. Similarly, the absence of any political or judgmental stance in any of these



Ian Taberner, project for a May 4 Memorial (site plan), Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, 1986.

recent memorials should not be construed to indicate a meaningless or idiosyncratic use of symbolic formulae.

This paper contends that both Vietnam-related memorials and, as a consequence, their offspring decidedly evoke what will herein be called the elegiac tradition, and that this artistic tradition is the appropriate one for the memorials of this present age which has yet to come to terms fully with the divisive and still unintelligible era of America's military involvement in Vietnam.

An elegy is a meditative expression, usually a lyric poem, which laments the death of a public personage, but more especially a loved one or a friend. By extension, then, an elegy can also reflect upon the broader theme of human mortality in general. Consider, for example, these lines from William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis":

... Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim Thy growth,
to be resolved to earth again, And, lost
each human trace, surrendering up Thine
individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock . . .⁴

Rather than aggrandize external events within the public domain, the elegy conveys the artist's personal sentiments or emotions on the inevitable nature of death. An elegy is, therefore, nearly the antithesis of the heroic tradition which displays instead a wide public expression of loss and gratitude tantamount to the bestowal of immortality upon the individual being remembered. That elegies oppose the heroic tradition is made clear by these lines from the most famous elegy of all, Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard":

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?⁵

A particular type of elegy known as the pastoral elegy utilizes the humanistic conventions of an idealized pastoral background, or Arcadia, along with idealized shepherd inhabitants. These conventions can be traced back to the writings of Virgil, who transformed the ancient Greeks' factual descriptions of a savage and rugged district of Greece called Arcady into a mythical land of youthful abandon and bliss.⁶ Pastoral ele-



Ian Taberner, project for a May 4 Memorial (model), Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 1986.

gies usually contain descriptions of funeral processions, give evidence of sympathetic mourning throughout nature, and muse upon the unkindness of death with a certain degree of acceptance. Humanistic studies of the literary elegy in the Renaissance soon found parallel visual expressions in the arts, and so the first pictorial renderings of death's presence in Arcadia were created in the 1600s. In these paintings, a tranquil dissonance emerges, a lyrical discrepancy between nature perfected, as seen the background, and human existence limited, as represented by a tomb in the foreground; and with these paintings, we also encounter the Latin phrase *Et in Arcadia ego* for the first time.⁷

In his beautifully written essay on paintings with the theme *Et in Arcadia ego*, Erwin Panofsky points out that the phrase has been interpreted in two ways: "I, the deceased here entombed, also was once in Arcadia" or "I, Death, also am present in Arcadia." Not only do these two alternatives differ on the person speaking, but they differ as well on the time frame, moving from past tense to present tense. The phrase, therefore, may be read to have an elegiac, retrospective tone of remembrance if one assumes that the deceased is speaking from his grave, or the phrase may project an anticipatory tone of immediate menace if one assumes that Death personified is speaking.⁸ The confusion over the proper translation is due in large part to the ingenious melding of the two readings in the classic depiction of the subject, a painting by Nicolas Poussin variously dated from

about 1639 to after 1655, and now held by the Louvre.⁹

The Louvre painting is Poussin's second version of the subject, the earlier version now at Chatsworth being dated to 1629. Both versions depict an idealized backdrop of nature contrasted with a dark moment of death in the form of a foreground tomb. In each painting, three shepherds are stopped in their carefree wanderings by the sight of the tomb; but the river god in the Chatsworth version is replaced by a lovely maiden of uncertain symbolic intent in the Louvre version. Perhaps she is the spirit of death; or perhaps she is the virtue of Reason, a monumental personification of comprehension confronting the unintelligible.¹⁰ In any event, one shepherd in each version traces with his finger the letters of the carved inscription on the tomb as if in an attempt to decipher its meaning. The remaining shepherds watch their companion or reflect for themselves upon the glyphic cryptogram *Et in Arcadia ego*.

Poussin's second version, the Louvre painting, achieves a more masterful degree of harmony and a greater profundity of meaning than the earlier version due somewhat to the expected tendency of any artist to find the elemental expression of an idea in the reworking of an earlier attempt. Note how much simpler the second version of the tomb is. Being placed parallel to the picture plane and without much recession depth, it gives the entire composition of the Louvre version more strength and greater clarity, a less cultured appearance overall.¹¹ It is exactly this sort of synthesizing approach, which reduces a variety of elements to a single essence, that invites comparisons between Poussin's masterpiece and Maya Lin's award-winning design for a deceptively simple memorial dedicated to the dead and missing veterans of the war in Vietnam. The comparison begins to refute those critics who have called Lin's design a meaningless abstraction.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a pure, dark stone structure in an idealized bit of

nature; and like the sepulchres in Poussin's pictorial antecedents, its carvings compel one to touch its surfaces, too. The memorial is not composed of insensible rock. At the wall, fingers retrace letters of names carved thereon. Visitors move past the memorial at a funerary processional pace, attempting to fathom the unintelligible. Inhabitants of this land of bounty and bliss use the wall to meditate upon matters of human mortality by remembering a loved one taken from them or by considering their own inevitable fate. Rising up from the ground and submerging again, the memorial resolves earth unto earth. In this memorial, the contemporary age finds its architectonic counterpart to the literary and artistic elegiac traditions. Born of a war which cannot be exulted and which nurtured "baby-killers," not heroes, in the exaggerated opinion of many a political protestor in the 1960s, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial finds its only possible and relevant means of materialization through the undeniable elegiac concept underlying Maya Lin's design. This elegy in stone has helped Americans of whatever opinions to find some common ground. This scar has helped to heal a nation. Jan Scruggs, the man behind the idea for a memorial, tells us that Lin wanted it to read like an epic Greek poem and so arranged for the names to be inscribed chronologically, not alphabetically.¹²

One visitor to the wall sobbed, not when he read his son's name, but when he recognized the names of soldiers his son had mentioned in letters mailed home.¹³ Lin saw her design more as visual poetry, Scruggs says, than as architecture, and she rejected suggestions that she ought to change its color from black to white.¹⁴ She knew instinctively that black polished walls were absolutely necessary in order to evoke the full emotive power of her elegy.

The memorial is not mere insensible stone. Its walls are not mute or black. Its reflectivity is the feature which most gives it life; and yet even this reflectivity, the catalyst for so much of the meditation and mourning associated with the memorial, has its conceptual roots in Poussin's Louvre painting. As Poussin's

kneeling shepherd traces the inscription, he casts a shadow on the tomb, a ghostly presence which cannot be ignored. Art historian Lawrence Steefel has noted that this slightly anamorphic shadow possesses a dominant, central presence in the painting.¹⁵ The shadow is the painting's essential melding element. Its ephemeral character reinforces and reiterates the theme of mortality in the painting as a whole, speaks to the question of what it is that the tomb contains, binds the unwitting shepherd to his own future mortality, and even provokes the informed viewer of the work of art into anticipatory meditations upon his or her own death. The faces of people which are mirrored in the wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial act in much the same melding sort of way and, thereby, give our elegiac-based comparison of painting to monument a wonderful symmetry.

Maya Lin's design was not the first architectonic expression of the elegiac tradition. The history of that tradition has yet to be fully documented, but earlier examples readily come to mind. Louis H. Sullivan's Martin Ryerson tomb (1889) in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery is a dark mausoleum which springs from a gracefully flared base. It is constructed of blocks of polished blue-black granite not necessarily to convey a feeling of somberness so much as to embody and reflect the springing of life in nature all around it.¹⁶ And in that same cemetery, Dirk Lohan placed a simple, polished tablet of dark stone to mark the tomb of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1969), his grandfather.¹⁷ All around these two memorials is evidence of the waning emotive power of that other, more heroic tradition built up of white columned forms. They clumsily serve as tombs for America's merchant princes—the Kimbells and the Palmers and the Pullmans.

Maya Lin's commemorative wall may also have antecedents in Jerusalem's Western (Wailing) Wall and in Eric Mendelsohn's unbuilt project for a New York memorial to the victims of the Holocaust (1951-52).¹⁸ But the memorials which had the most profound influence upon Maya Lin were those designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens following World War I.¹⁹

It is significant that Lin should have focused her attention on that first group of memorials which, in their transitional forms, began to cast doubt on the future viability of traditional heroic memorials. The Somme Memorial at Thiepval, France, in particular, held power over Lin. She dismissed the triumphant Roman arches and wreaths of victory overhead and concentrated instead on the row upon row of names carved in the simple stone bases. In front of the arch, Lutyens had placed a finely proportioned, nondenominational (hence nonjudgmental) Stone of Remembrance carved with the words "THEIR NAME LIVETH FOREVER MORE."²⁰ Lutyens also pressed for a uniformity to each gravesite and for headstones of unvarying pattern.²¹ When Lin similarly insisted that military ranks ought not to appear on her wall along side the names, she brought all individual personalities before the great common leveling force of mortality, thereby further augmenting the power of her lithic elegy.²²

Let us turn our attention to the original winning design proposed for a May 4 Memorial at Kent State University. Largely the inspiration of architect Ian Taberner, the design was to have straddled an existing sidewalk which rises up and over the crest of a hill overlooking the Commons where war protestors and guardsmen skirmished around noon on May 4, 1970. The memorial also would have been located near the Taylor Hall parking lot in and around which thirteen students lay dead or wounded just a few minutes past noon that same day. Taberner proposed cutting the walk into the earth by as much as three or four feet. One stone wall defining the processional path would be broken by four entries into tumulus-like rooms intended for private meditations and by a fifth entry into a sort of archaic rectangular amphitheater for group assemblies. On the opposite stone wall were to be four gashes aligned with the four tumulus entries to signify the four slain students; nine smaller carvings, representing the nine wounded students, were to be disposed rhythmically between the major gashes in three groups of three.

When Taberner's design was unveiled, comparisons of its formal and functional similarities to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial could hardly be avoided. Both designs, each the winning entry of a national competition, were essentially landscape solutions where processional stone walls were buried in the earth, thus bespeaking an elegiac antiheroism. Both designs attempted to commemorate contemporaneous events which engender strong opposing opinions to this day. At Kent State University, those opinions clash on the matter of who is to blame for the killing of four student protestors and bystanders and the wounding of nine others as a result of a volley of shots fired from the rifles of Ohio National Guard troops. And so both memorial designs responded to similar programmatic demands for formal solutions of an apolitical or nonjudgmental character. Additionally, it was noted that the professional AIA advisor to each competition was the same individual, Paul Spreiregen.²³ In the final analysis, however, what the two separate winning solutions most shared was a recognition that adherence to an elegiac tradition was the most fitting response in each case.

Taberner's proposal will not be realized. He was disqualified when he announced that he was a Canadian citizen, a violation of the very first competition rule limiting participation to Americans.²⁴ Therefore, we cannot speak for Taberner on the manner by which he would have detailed his design, but the elegy within his conceptual proposal is not difficult to sense. In fact, the savage, primordial qualities of the design hearken all the way back to the original ancient Greek descriptions of that actual region in the Peloponnese called Arcady, which was characterized by landscapes that were barren and rocky, not sylvan, and by lifestyles that were archaic and brutal, not pastoral. Taberner's design also addresses the matter of touch, except that here there is a somewhat more brutish attitude. His design reduces the act of meditation to a ritualistic, yet most primal, urge to run one's hand along a worked surface. Even the sensibilities of the blind could be satisfied by

feeling the exaggerated carved grooves which signify loss through untimely death.

Oberlin, Ohio, casualties in all wars since 1861, including Vietnam.²⁹

It would be unwise to assert that the May 4 Memorial was predestined to be an architectural elegy. Nevertheless, the reasons put forth to explain the failure of earlier proposals to capture the public's imagination suggest that the inevitable and half-conscious tendency at Kent State University was to drift toward an elegiac memorial solution. A figural sculpture by George Segal was rejected by all constituencies in 1978 because its subject, the sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham, was deemed to be inappropriately too violent.²⁵ The events of May 4, 1970, would not permit of any memorial that seemed to retreat to past notions of glory or heroism no matter how much they were veiled in biblical allusions; and the subliminal expression of a covenant, or agreement, within the Segal sculpture did not accord well with the highly politicized atmosphere and polar opinions then current during the litigious resolution of the original conflict. As J. B. Jackson has reminded us, a traditional monument is a type of widely honored contract entered into on a specific occasion. It confers an immortality on the dead and imposes obligations of loyalty on the living.²⁶ These were not the predominant sentiments to grow out of the events of May 4, 1970. In 1980, a May 4 memorial Roman arch of common brick was proposed by the university administration, but it was bitterly criticized by the student body for the much too obvious and misdirected signals of military triumph it was sending out.²⁷ The university architect wisely likened his design not to Constantine's arch or to Napoleon's but to Oberlin College's Memorial Arch, which was dedicated in 1903 to those Oberlin missionaries and their children who were murdered in the Shansi province of China.²⁸ Thus, the philosophical and ideological justifications for a May 4 arch had a certain tenuous rationale to them, but the university architect might have been on safer formalistic ground had he associated his brick memorial instead with Oberlin's Soldiers Monument. Dedicated in 1943, this simple brick wall within an earthen embankment holds arched tablets listing

Woven into the elegiac memorials under consideration here are other minor themes which include the undertone of a medievalizing narrative or moralistic tradition and the concept of the sacred grove. The former theme confronts a startled consciousness directly with death through a memento mori, or object of death. For example, Poussin's first version of *Et in Arcadia ego* and Giovanni Francesco Guercino's earlier version of about 1621-23 both contain representations of a human skull and sometimes scavenging mice and flies, common iconographic devices which signify decay and all-consuming time. These memento mori are especially prominent in Guercino's painting, which was, incidentally, the very first such pictorial representation of the theme of death in Arcadia.³⁰ The mementos are lingering vestiges of a medieval moralizing convention which is best exemplified in Francesco Traini's *Triumph of Death* fresco dated about 1350 and located in the Campo Santo in Pisa, Italy.³¹ Scenes of indulgent and thoughtless pursuits of pleasure in this fresco are contrasted with a rocky landscape in which three elegant young knights and their frolicking attendants emerge on horseback from the edge of a forest and stumble upon the sobering discovery of three corpses in various states of decay. The roused consciousness is thereby warned of the transience of life and its pleasures. Poussin's Louvre version of *Et in Arcadia ego* is, as we have seen, a more elemental depiction than earlier versions. There is no clutter of memento mori in it; but despite the improvements and the classicist rejection of les objets bizarres, the Louvre painting stills conveys the distilled tone of a medieval moralizing message in humanistic disguise.³² The controversial addition of a flag to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as well as a Frederick Hart sculpture of three soldiers set at the edge of a nearby grove of trees may have diluted the impact of Maya Lin's design, but their clutter has a certain usefulness if understood to be contemporary inheritors of a medieval narrative tradition that seeks to awaken the consciousness to the discovery of the nature of death.³³

When the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated, thousands of people surged forward to touch the names and to leave behind memento mori: flowers, photographs, letters, medals, and other personal mementos, even cremated remains.³⁴ Their actions were totally unexpected and unconventional as they discovered the wall. It was, perhaps, the setting more than anything else that encouraged each individual to act out a highly personal, commemorative observance. The memorial is located in a public outdoor space which is only minimally structured. The site is one of the very few bits of the "sacred turf" on the Washington Mall which is not regularized to the extreme and, therefore, neither implores one to feel a sense of civic duty nor imposes any sort of regimented pattern of acceptable social behavior.³⁵ Framed by a small forest of trees, the memorial site becomes a sacred grove, each individual's personal chapel in the wilderness.³⁶ Perhaps the preferred location for a May 4 Memorial, on the edge of a stand of trees, would have also rendered to that site a reverential nature had Taberner's design been realized. In any event, both minor themes speak in a most direct and appropriate manner to those issues which have characterized the Vietnam era in America. It was a time when the print and electronic news media barraged us daily with startling images of death, a time when dissent was manifested in patterns of speech, action, music, and dress sometimes so extreme as to challenge socially acceptable modes of behavior like never before.

Finally, space does not permit a full discussion here of the thematic use of reflective surfaces to symbolize doorways to other, shadowy worlds. The fabled precedent of Narcissus comes first to mind, and it suggests that mirrors have long been associated with death. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables*, for example, one passage recounts the legend of a parlor looking-glass said to contain the images of all the past inhabitants of the house. Upon the recent death of one of their descendants, these spirits assemble in processional fashion before his lifeless body seated stiffly in a parlor chair. It is the one chapter in the entire book

where Hawthorne indulges a fancy to transform the factual narration of actual events into prose elegy which ponders the realm of death. Hawthorne asks of his listeners to be excused of his indulgences. If, in this paper, reflections on recent memorials have seemed to diverge too far into elegiac fancies, then we will offer the same excuse for our indulgences: "We were betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of the [light]beams; they dance hand- in-hand with shadows, and are reflected in the looking glass, which, you are aware, is always a kind of window or doorway into the spiritual world. [Moreover, we needed relief] from our too long and exclusive contemplation of that figure in the chair."³⁷

Notes

1 On April 30, 1970, President Richard Nixon appeared on national television to announce that American and South Vietnamese troops would invade Cambodia in order to destroy North Vietnamese military headquarters finding sanctuary there. The invasion was seen by many Americans as an expansion of the war in Vietnam. The next day, antiwar demonstrations and sometimes violent protests erupted all across the nation. Protests at Kent State University were so destructive that Ohio National Guard troops were called in to try to restore order. On Monday, May 4, 1970, guardsmen were ordered to break up a scheduled noontime student rally held to protest the continued presence of the guardsmen on campus. The confrontational situation escalated to the point that guardsmen fired live ammunition in the direction of the demonstrators. Four students were killed and nine others were wounded. The tragic event became the symbol of a deep rift in American society caused by the war in Vietnam. See Peter Davies *The Truth About Kent State: A Challenge to the American Conscience* Noonday Press (New York) 1973.

2 Betsky, Aaron "Black and White," *CRIT* 12 (Winter 1983) p. 4. Betsky effectively argues that Maya Lin's abstract design mirrors nothing more significant than the inability of contemporary architecture to symbolize and order our society.

3 Louisiana's Veterans Memorial in Baton Rouge was formally dedicated in 1987. It commemorates that state's dead and missing veterans from all wars since 1776. The memorial is a square space half buried into the Mississippi River levee. Its interior walls are faced with polished black stone slabs inscribed with names. Louisiana Congressman Henson Moore, as a result of having been favorably impressed with the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., asked Baton Rouge architect John J. Desmond to "come up with a few sketches for a wall with names" to serve as a state memorial. In Kansas City, Missouri, a regional Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in 1986. The design was a wall of polished blue-grey granite inscribed with names and half buried into a hillside. The Kansas City Memorial was designed by a committee comprised only of Vietnam veterans. Architect Don Stanley contends that only a very small portion of the design's inspiration was derived in any conscious way from the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This information is the result of personal telephone conversations the author conducted with both Desmond and Stanley.

4 Bryant composed "Thanatopsis," which means "a view of death," while he was still in his teens. It was published in 1817 and is generally considered to be the first great American poem.

5 Gray composed and polished his famous elegy over nine years beginning in 1742 after the death of a close friend. Gray uses the word "mansion," of course, as a metaphor for the body.

6 Panofsky, Erwin "Et in Arcadia Ego" *Meaning in the Visual Arts* Doubleday (New York) 1955, pp. 299-304.

7 *ibid.*, pp. 300, 304-5.

8 *ibid.*, pp. 306-7. Panofsky offers convincing grammatical evidence that the latter translation, with Death as the speaker in the present tense, is the correct one.

9 Panofsky maintains (pp. 311-16) that

Poussin intended that only the past-tense translation of the phrase can be read into this Louvre version of the painting. Walter Friedlander (*Nicolas Poussin: A New Approach* Harry N. Abrams [New York] 1966, pp. 150-51), dates the painting either from 1639 to 1640 or from 1642-1643. Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr., "A Neglected Shadow in Poussin's Et in Arcadia Ego," *Art Bulletin* 67 (March 1975) 99, favors a date as late as 1655.

10 Friedlander, p. 150, identifies the female figure as a classical priestess. Steefel, pp. 100-101, argues most successfully that she is the personification of Reason, or ratio, a concept closely related to the goddess Athena; as such, this monumental virtuous figure becomes a symbol of comprehension confronting the unintelligible.

11 Panofsky, pp. 312-13.

12 Scruggs, Jan C. and Swerdlow, Joel L. *To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* Harper & Row (New York) 1985, pp. 78, 148.

13 *ibid.*, p. 124.

14 *ibid.*, p. 59. Maya Lin, then a student at Yale University, was enrolled in Professor Andrus Burr's course on funerary architecture. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was a required design assignment. Lin's classmates convinced her to eliminate a row of falling dominoes that she had placed in front of her memorial wall; but, fortunately, they could not convince her to change its color from black to white.

15 Steefel, p. 100.

16 Morrison, Hugh *Louis Sullivan: Prophet of Modern Architecture* W. W. Norton (New York) 1962, p. 128.

17 Pressman, Lenore *Graceland Cemetery: A Historical and Artistic Guide* Illinois Arts Council (Chicago) 1976 [p. 12]. Also, the author discussed Mies van der Rohe's tomb with Dirk Lohan in March 1984 when Lohan visited the Kent State University campus.

18 Von Eckardt, Wolf *Eric Mendelsohn* George Braziller (New York) 1960, pp. 30-31, 112. Mendelsohn's first version for the Holocaust Memorial included a plaza, a partially covered assembly hall, a commemorative wall, and two tall tablet-like pillars symbolizing the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The second version synthesized those elements into a simpler composition which emphasized the tablets and a wall cut into a hillside.

19 Scruggs, p. 77.

20 *ibid.* See also Arnold Whittick, *War Memorials* Country Life Limited (London) 1946, pp. 34-35, 49, 51.

21 Lutyens, Mary *Edwin Lutyens* John Murray (London) 1980, p. 154.

22 Scruggs, pp. 83, 153.

23 The differences between the two competitions have been less frequently mentioned. Prime among those differences is the proposed location of the May 4 Memorial at the site of the tragic event it is to commemorate. That site has a dramatic slope unlike the relatively flat terrain of the Constitution Gardens where the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is located. Yet the implications of differing site response did not generate two dissimilar winning designs. Indeed, the presence of advisor Spreiregen and juror Grady Clay on both competition panels may even have prompted a few May 4 Memorial competitors to model their proposals on Maya Lin's design. But, as my main text emphasizes, programmatic parameters and judging criteria aside, what the two separate winning entries most shared was the perception that an elegiac concept would be most fitting. Unfortunately, Kent State University has yet to publish a catalogue of representative samples from its national competition, so that it is difficult to make any further assessments concerning differences or similarities between the two competitions.

24 The history of the May 4 Memorial competition is as complex as it is interesting. As such, it deserves its own paper; but the basic

facts, gleaned from various articles in the Kent State University student newspaper, *The Daily Kent Stater*, are outlined as follows: Ian Taberner was proclaimed the winner of the competition on April 4, 1986, but was disqualified just a few days later by Kent State University President Michael Schwartz after Taberner had informed Schwartz of the citizenship problem. Schwartz declared Taberner's competition partner, Michael G. Fahey, to be the new winner; however, Fahey refused the award and its associated responsibilities, citing Taberner's almost exclusive authorship of the design. Rather than disqualify Taberner's design, too, the university attempted to build the design without Taberner's direct participation. Negotiations to employ Taberner as a consultant broke down. Ironically, in terms of the theme of this paper, the university's insistence that the memorial not have names inscribed on it and that it be built of less costly concrete instead of stone were rumored to be at least two of the issues which eventually led to the breakdown of negotiations. The university then declared Bruno Ast's second-place design to be the winner on July 2, 1986. Taberner's ensuing lawsuit was eventually settled out of court. It is difficult to understand why the university relaxed its enforcement of the competition rules in the first place. Had they followed the advice in chapter ten of the Spreiregen's book on competitions, they might have avoided this remarkable chain of embarrassing events. See Paul D. Spreiregen, *Design Competitions* McGraw-Hill (New York) 1979, p. 275.

25 In rejecting Segal's sculpture, university officials suggested to him that he try the motif of a nude woman using her feminine wiles to tempt a soldier into putting down his rifle and leaving the battlefield. See Sam Hunter and Don Hawthorne, *George Segal* Rizzoli (New York) 1984, p. 344. It is important to note that most published photographs of the Segal sculpture focus only on the figures and crop out that half of the statue's pedestal which supports only a spatial void above. Had equal emphasis been given to that void, different interpretations might have been read into the sculpture thus rendering it more acceptable. The Segal sculpture was eventually donated

to Princeton University whose officials praised the bronze sculpture as a noteworthy return to the monumental origins of sculpture. They claimed that it afforded our present-day society the opportunity to express our culture in a more meaningful way than do some twentieth-century pieces of abstract art.

26 Jackson, John Brinckerhoff "The Necessity for Ruins" In *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* University of Massachusetts Press (Amherst) 1980, p. 93.

27 Ted Curtis was the university architect. His design was to measure 18 feet long, 12 feet high, and about 3 feet deep. He proposed locating it at one end of the Taylor Hall parking lot.

28 Curtis likened his design to Oberlin's Memorial Arch at a meeting with Kent State University architecture students on March 13, 1980. Also, see Geoffrey Blodgett, *Oberlin Architecture, College and Town: A Guide to Its Social History* Kent State University Press (Kent) 1985, pp. 12-13.

29 Blodgett, pp. 207-8.

30 Panofsky, pp. 304-9.

31 *ibid.* p. 309. Also, see Ernest T. DeWald *Italian Painting, 1200-1600* Holt, Rinehart, and Winston (New York) 1961, pp. 171-73.

32 By contrast, Panofsky, p. 312, claims that Poussin's second version breaks radically in all respects with earlier versions.

33 Hart had been awarded third place in the competition. See Scruggs, pp. 49, 51, 64, 101, 116, 128-29, *et passim*.

34 *ibid.*, pp. 148, 153-54.

35 *ibid.*, pp. 73, 133, reports that J. Carter Brown, chairman of the powerful Fine Arts Commission in Washington, D.C., considered the Mall to be "sacred turf."

36 Jackson, "The Sacred Grove in America" *Necessity*, pp. 77-88 more thoroughly dis-

cusses the relationship of the sacred grove, as a space free of social or behavioral control, to the early American rural church camp meetings. Perhaps it is of no consequence that the same carnival atmosphere which pervaded those meetings is played out each May 4 on the Commons and the wooded memorial site at Kent State University.

37 Hawthorne, Nathaniel *The House of the Seven Gables* New American Library (New York) 1961, p. 244. Hawthorne's novel was first published in 1851.



